

WOMAN WITH A WHISTLE

Julia Lee warms up for the Varsity match

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BROWN'S BUDGET TEST

Anatole Kaletsky on the challenge to Labour

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Libby Purves

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Vendetta against me, says Prescott

BY PHILIP WEBSTER, NICHOLAS WATT, PAUL WILKINSON AND DOMINIC KENNEDY

JOHN PRESCOTT claimed last night that he was the victim of a "concerted and shadowy" campaign to undermine him in his Hull constituency.

last year at his garage in Hull, when old computer papers were stolen, the theft of dustbins from outside his home, anonymous calls by people making false allegations to local and national newspapers, and, most recently, claims that his son, Jonathan, was involved in questionable property deals were all part of the same plot.

to suspend the Hull Labour Party, pending investigation of allegations of impropriety and police inquiries into expenses claims and child abuse. "It may be that someone wants to pay me back for that," Mr Prescott said.

wife, Pauline, and their son found it upsetting. "The linked episodes make you nervous."

been commissioned by Labour councillors opposed to Mr Prescott but had gone "freelance" to sell their so-called revelations.

council files showing details on the rates of 17 properties owned by Mr Cutting. He used similar methods at the offices of the gas company Transco to obtain information about another house.

that his son has done anything improper. "This is a curious kind of vendetta," he said. "Shady people are going round offering things to papers, sending things to local branch parties about me—they are all lies—but ringing my bank manager up was about the last straw."

McAliskey wins fight against extradition

BY RICHARD FORD, ROGER BOYES AND MARTIN FLETCHER

ROISIN MCALISKEY, the terrorist suspect, last night won her 15-month battle against extradition to Germany on IRA bombing charges.

Mr Straw's decision, made only days before Sinn Féin decided whether to re-enter the peace talks, was condemned as "appeasing republicanism" by hardline Unionists.



Louise Woodward with her father, Gary, at the appeal hearing yesterday. She may have to wait until the summer to learn her fate

Baby could be exhumed if au pair faces murder retrial

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN BOSTON

LOUISE WOODWARD may have to face full retrial over the death of eight-month-old Matthew Eappen — and if she does, her defence lawyers are prepared to ask for the baby's body to be exhumed.

Instead, a retrial has emerged as the most likely outcome. Ms Woodward's lawyer Andrew Good argued yesterday that the defence had been denied access to crucial evidence because the baby had been buried after the state's post-mortem examination.

the baby's death had been an old injury. Asked by Justice John Greaney whether he would need to exhumate the body in the event of a retrial, Mr Good said: "Yes, we would ask to exhumate, if it would prove efficacious."

script and a judge says "no." Ms Singh then argued that Judge Zobel had abused his statutory discretion in substituting his verdict of manslaughter for the jury's verdict of murder.



Roisin McAliskey: free

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Keyhole surgery fixes Prince's troublesome knee

BY MATTHEW BEARD AND ROBIN YOUNG

THE Prince of Wales was admitted to hospital yesterday for an operation to correct damage to his right knee.

uled for today. He returned to Highgrove in Gloucestershire, and this morning is due to fly to Wales by helicopter. His programme in Wales includes a tour of the Ford car factory in Bridgend where he will be ferried around the plant in a buggy.

personal assistant, already in Wales, said the 49-year-old Prince had previously had a similar operation on his other knee in 1992. On that occasion the surgery to remove damaged cartilage was said to have followed an injury sustained during an early morning warm-up exercise.

more discomfort as a result of the operation.

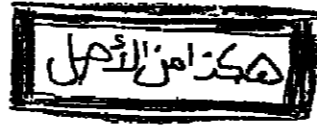
The Prince arrived unnoticed before noon yesterday at the private hospital in London, where Princess Margaret is recovering from a mild stroke and where the Queen Mother recently underwent hip replacement surgery.

5 facts about stalkers

- Under new harassment laws convicted stalkers can receive a 5 year sentence
- About 1000 people have been charged under these laws in the last 8 months
- One survey estimates that 1% of British women have been stalked
- 20% of female murder victims in America were previously stalked by their killers
- Princess Anne, David Beckham and Helena Bonham Carter have all been stalked

tonight 8:30pm on 5

PEOPLE LIFE NEWS



Captain Soames goes over the ethnic top

DOES Nicholas Soames propose the revival of The King's African Rifles?

The suspicion arose yesterday as Mr Soames stormed in to question defence ministers. Jane Griffiths (Lab. Reading E) had urged the Government to recruit more members of the ethnic minorities to the Armed Forces. Ministers sounded pleased with efforts already made.

As well they might be: the ministry aims for a 5 per cent ethnic contingent by 2001, said John Reid, the junior minister. He did not mention his own party's recruitment policies. The black or Asian proportion of the Parliamentary Labour Party is 1.9 per cent. Unless Labour stages a ruthless cull of white MPs and replace them with black ones at by-elections, the Armed Forces will beat their



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

political masters at this game. It was then that Mr Soames rose. A former forces minister himself, the MP for Sussex Mid was once Captain Soames of the Hussars. Wouldn't it be a good idea, he rumbled, "if members of the ethnic minorities were able to serve together in — er — bigger blocks?" Soames argued that they would feel less isolated. The minister found it an interesting thought.

Having spent one's boyhood opposing apartheid, it feels strange to spot the old enemy sneaking into the Commons benches in new, politically correct clothes, and making new friends. But

perhaps Mr Soames is right? If so, why not take his logic to its conclusion? The King's African Rifles would be a misnomer for soldiers who were neither African nor the King's. Perhaps the Queen's Ethnic Fusiliers might serve? And, talking of queens, could Captain Soames have stumbled upon the key to the vexed question of gays in the Armed Forces? The military objection has always been that for homosexual soldiers to serve alongside heterosexual ones would be awkward. So how about a whole regiment? Recruiting posters could be placed in Old Compton Street in Soho. This could

give the Gay Gordons a whole new meaning.

Another former officer leaping into battle yesterday was the former Captain Brazier — now the Tory MP for Canterbury. Tall, good-natured, guileless, fearless and slightly dazed, Brazier is an ex-Para who reminds us of the story about the Gurkhas who grinded their teeth but saluted on receiving orders to jump from 3,000ft. — and were enormously relieved when told they could take parachutes.

It seems that a little note had found its way from Brazier to the chair. "I understand," said Madam Speaker, calling him to speak, "that Mr Brazier served with The Parachute Regiment."

Brazier rose proudly. "A fine big man!" said the minister, Dr Reid, in slightly



Soames answer to ethnic recruitment

cheeky Scots tones. Captain Brazier's mission was to mount a counter-offensive against rumours that the Paras face the axe. He spoke

of their glories, fiddling with a ghost parachute-toggle somewhere near the beltline. "Nobody's talking about disbanding the Paras," protested Reid — with the urgency of one anxious to reassure a nervous public that the unleashing into civilian life of thousands of Paras — which could make Care in the Community look like a teddy-bears' picnic — was ruled out.

It was good to see the Secretary of State, George Robertson, looking so frisky after his recent anthrax inoculation photo-opportunity. "I was so satisfied it was safe," he purred. "I plan to have the three further injections that are advised. 'I've never felt better in my... aarrgh.'" — and he slumped over the dispatch box.

Sorry, I made the ending up.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Brown declares war on fraud in Europe

Britain yesterday used its presidency of the EU to call on member states to answer individually for billions of pounds of EU funds that have been subject to waste, fraud and mismanagement.

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, told finance ministers that he would call on all 15 states to explain what their governments were doing to combat the abuses that are identified each year by the Court of Auditors, the EU's financial watchdog. "We must deal with this issue. If countries are shown to be using money incorrectly they may have to pay it back," he said. The last auditors' report, in November, revealed that 5.4 per cent of the EU budget, representing £2.8 billion, could not be accounted for.

Sinn Fein silent on funds

Sinn Fein has failed to provide details of its income and overseas donations to the inquiry into party funding. A party official told the Committee on Standards in Public Life that Sinn Fein had yet to decide whether to co-operate with the inquiry. Sinn Fein yesterday refused to return to the Stormont peace talks at the end of its 17-day suspension. Gerry Adams, the president, said the party would decide how and when to return after meeting Tony Blair this week.

Passive smoking rebuke

The World Health Organisation yesterday accused the tobacco industry of misleading the public about its report on passive smoking. Karol Sikora, head of the WHO's cancer programme, said industry spin-doctors had used tips-offs to the media to highlight passages in a confidential report which they considered favourable to their cause. Professor Sikora said the ten-year study had found a relationship between lung cancer and passive smoking.

Nurse dies on holiday

A nurse has drowned while trying to save her 69-year-old mother off Gran Canaria. Jacqueline Donnelly, 34, from Middletown, Co Armagh, saw her mother, Annie, get into difficulties as she swam. Witnesses say that the pair seem to have been caught in a strong current. Lifeguards managed to rescue Mrs Donnelly, a retired matron, and last night she was in intensive care. Her other daughter, who was also on the break, was said to be in shock.

St Paul's casts wider Net

St Paul's Cathedral launched an Internet page where callers can check opening times, read a diary of events, download a map, and take a virtual-reality tour. The cathedral also intends to use the site to spread the Christian message, and will offer memorabilia for sale online later this year to pay the running costs. The £5,000 needed to design the page was provided through sponsorship from BT. The address is: <http://stpauls.london.anglican.org>

Duke's open house

The Duke of Northumberland is offering his homes in London and the North East as a resource for students and schoolchildren. Alwick Castle in Northumberland and Syon House in Isleworth, West London, will become bases for studies on anything from gamekeeping to the history of art. The 12th duke hopes the wealth of knowledge, experience and material available in his estate will be used to benefit the public and spread understanding of its role.

Al Fayed blackmailed

Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods, was the target of a £75,000 extortion plot that was foiled last March, the Old Bailey was told. Geoffrey Crossley, 49, unemployed, of Lancaster, who is now blind after a road accident, admitted blackmail. Simon Peach, 32, also from Lancaster, admitted attempting to obtain property by deception. The case was adjourned for medical reports and both men will be sentenced in May.

Rail offer to jobless

Unemployed people in Great Yarmouth or Lowestoft will be able to have free rail travel to Norwich if they have a job interview under a trial scheme introduced by Anglia Railways. The rail company is offering the unemployed up to six free return journeys and, if they get a job, a half-price season ticket for a month. If the three-month trial is successful, the scheme will be extended to the rest of the network in East Anglia.

Carers need video skills

Knowing how to repair a video or understanding funky music are more important than medical skills in treating seriously ill psychiatric patients, according to a study into a new kind of mental health care. "If you are able to fix their video or do something useful for them, you can gain their trust and it becomes much easier to treat them," said Matt Muirjen, of the Salisbury Centre for Mental Health, which launched the study called *Keys to Engagement*.

Wonder of Woolworths

Sales staff at a Woolworths store won half of the National Lottery jackpot on Saturday, but will keep their £4-million jobs. The entire weekday workforce at Woolworths in Leek, Staffordshire, formed the 14-strong syndicate that won just over £4 million. Eileen Holland, 40, at the store for 23 years, said: "It's part of my life. We are more like a family than workmates." The winning numbers — 4, 11, 14, 39, 43 and 44 — were bought on a lucky dip ticket at Woolworths.

Unmarried fathers may be given equal right over children

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

UNMARRIED fathers could be given the same rights of parental responsibility as married men under government proposals published yesterday.

The move comes after growing protests from men who discover they have few rights over the upbringing, surname and adoption of their child — even if they live with the mother in a stable relationship. But academics and family groups said last night that the proposals published by the Lord Chancellor would further undermine marriage by removing the bias against unmarried fathers.

Lord Irvine of Lairg's paper puts forward two options. One would alter the law to create an automatic link between biological parentage and responsibility, so that all fathers would be responsible for their children whatever their marital status at the time of the child's birth.

That would, however, be open to challenge on the ground that the man claiming responsibility was not the father. A mother would also have the right to override the father's rights in the case of a child born after a rape or in a violent relationship.

The second option would give an unmarried man automatic parental responsibility if he signed the birth register with the mother. Under existing law, an unmarried father

has no such rights or responsibilities unless he and the mother sign an agreement that is witnessed and registered in court, or unless the father has sought a parental responsibility order from the court.

The consultation paper says: "Discrimination between married and unmarried fathers in respect of parental responsibility is increasingly seen as unacceptable."

"It is clearly impossible to assume that most unmarried fathers are irresponsible or uninterested in their children, and do not deserve a legal role as parents."

In 1996, 232,663 births — or 35.8 per cent of the total registered in England and Wales — were outside marriage. Of those, more than 180,000 were registered with the father's details, but there were only 5,587 parental responsibility orders. The small number of agreements and orders reflects ignorance of the law, with many people assuming that an unmarried father has responsibility if both partners register the birth.

Another anomaly is that unmarried men can be forced to support their children financially even if they do not have parental responsibility.

Under existing law, a child can be adopted without the consent of an unmarried father without parental responsibility. The child's sur-

name can also be changed and he or she can leave the country without his consent.

Jim Parton, chairman of Families Need Fathers, said the changes were long overdue. "An awful lot of fathers assume they have parental responsibility but when the relationship with the mother of the child breaks down they find they have few rights."

Adrian Rogers, of the Conservative Family Institute, welcomed the proposal even though he admitted that it would weaken marriage. He said: "The rights of children should be based on their genetic father. The genetic parents should have responsibility. In the long run that might strengthen marriage."

A man who lost a lengthy battle to force his two-year-old son to be registered with his surname said the proposals would end discrimination against unmarried fathers. Mark Dawson failed in his bid to have his son named after him last August when Appeal Court judges overturned a previous court ruling that the boy should be called Alexander Guy Dawson.

Mr Dawson, 34, from Wellington, Somerset, said, "It would be difficult to overstate how much I am in favour of this move." Mr Dawson, who has spent thousands of pounds on legal fees, hopes to win the right to take his case to the House of Lords.



The television presenter Suzanne Dando at the launch of Marie Curie Cancer Care's Golden Daffodil Day. Laura Ashley stores are to sell lapel pins for the charity

Euro poll based on party list

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

VOTERS are to be deprived of the right to support individual candidates under polling plans for next year's European elections announced by Jack Straw yesterday.

The Home Secretary disappointed the Liberal Democrats, the Conservatives and electoral reform campaigners by opting for a system that will give additional power to the leaderships of all political parties. The Tories said it had shown power had gone to Labour's head.

Mr Straw has decided to adopt the so-called "closed" system under which voters will cast their votes for the party rather than the individual candidate. The party itself will draw up its list of candidates in its own order of preference.

VOTERS WANT RIGHT TO SAY NO

Many people are so unhappy with the choice of candidates that they want the right to register an abstention. A number have written to the commission on electoral reform headed by Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, which has been set up by the Prime Minister, suggesting that the

ballot paper should provide the chance to support "none of the above". Lord Jenkins, who is receiving about 40 letters a day, visits Cardiff today at the start of a tour of Britain to consult the public on whether they want the first-past-the-post system changed and, if so, how.

receiving the highest personal vote was not elected, while the candidate receiving the lowest personal vote was elected.

Sir Brian Mawhinney, the Shadow Home Secretary, said that Mr Straw's decision showed that power had gone to his head. Closed lists were a denial of true democracy, he added. "The British people will react badly."

Charter 88 welcomed the decision to introduce PR but said that the closed list left power to choose candidates solely in the hands of the party machine and "this could not be good for democracy".

Robert MacLennan, the Liberal Democrat constitution spokesman, said: "Everyone taking in this debate came down in favour of open lists, and I am disappointed that the Government have not been swayed by that consensus."

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Acid attack victim braves life of disfigurement

'Lucky to be alive' babysitter takes positive attitude towards her injuries, reports Simon de Bruxelles

THE babysitter severely disfigured after a hired attacker mistakingly threw nitric acid in her face is determined not to let the injuries ruin her life. Beverley Hammett's fortitude has amazed her family, as well as her plastic surgeon.



Beverley Hammett was babysitting for Susan Humphrey, below.

Miss Hammett, 21, recently resumed her training as a nursery nurse after undergoing nine operations in the 20 months since the attack; she expects to need at least six more. Despite permanent scarring, she says she is a more confident, more positive person than she was before the attack.

The fireman's daughter from Seaton, east Devon, was the victim of a feud between Peter Humphrey and his estranged wife, Susan, for whom she was working as a babysitter when she opened the door to the attacker. She was not in court yesterday to hear Humphrey jailed for ordering the attack on his wife.

On the evening concerned, Mrs Humphrey had gone out, leaving Miss Hammett with her three children. The babysitter was watching television when she heard the latch on the garden gate and opened the front door to investigate.

Mrs Humphrey's son, Adam, now 14, told Exeter Crown Court that he watched from the top of the stairs as the acid was thrown in Miss Hammett's face, producing a violent hissing sound and a cloud of white smoke.

At one point in the trial, it was suggested that Mrs Humphrey had arranged the attack herself. Gilbert Gray, QC, for Humphrey, said she probably intended to have the acid thrown at the front door, but the plot went horribly wrong when Miss Hammett opened it at the wrong moment.

After yesterday's verdict, police have renewed the hunt for the 6ft man who carried out the attack. They have issued a photofit of a man who stopped at a pub in Seaton on the night of the attack and asked directions to the Jane where Mrs Humphrey lived. An anonymous businessman has offered a £10,000 reward for information leading to his conviction.

Miss Hammett's remarkable presence of mind in the seconds after the attack may have saved her sight, and possibly her life. She said: "As soon as the liquid hit me, I knew it was some kind of chemical because it made the skin on my face tingle like there were thousands of tiny ants crawling over it."

"Although I was shocked I tried to keep calm and think logically. I could not open my eyes to see if anyone was still there because I was worried the acid would sting them. The fumes were choking me, but I knew I had to rinse off the liquid as soon as possible

and I made it to the kitchen. I was airlifted to hospital, but by then I was in so much pain I was drifting in and out of consciousness. I needed a lot of skin grafts and I wore a mask to protect my face, but I have refused to let this stop me doing the things I enjoy. I will not let it stop me achieving what I hope for.

"People tend to look at me when I pass them in the street, but it is mainly children who are too young to understand why I look different. I have gained a great deal from what has happened. It has made me a more confident and positive person. I believe things happen for a reason and this is no exception.

"So many people have been so kind to me in unexpected ways that it has made me realise we should not be quick to judge others. Probably the most important lesson I have learnt is to live for the moment because no one can be sure what is around the corner."

Doctors have told her that she would have been blinded by the attack if she had not been wearing spectacles and would have died if she had swallowed so much as a drop of the concentrated nitric acid.

Miss Hammett's mother, Val, said yesterday that her daughter had never expressed bitterness about her injuries and was more concerned for the welfare of Adam Humphrey than she was for her own. She said: "Despite all the trips to hospital and all the operations, Beverley has never complained about the pain and she has helped us all to be more positive about the future. She was more worried about the psychological effect on Adam than the physical effect on herself."

"Even when she was so weak that she could only get about in a wheelchair, she never became bitter about what had happened to her. She never said, 'Why me?'"

Sentencing Humphrey, the judge told him: "You carry the major share of the responsibility for ruining a young life. For the rest of her life Beverley Hammett will remain cruelly disfigured as a consequence of your evil act."

The terrible irony of this case is that she was not the intended victim. You intended that your wife should have nitric acid thrown in her face. Miss Hammett wears glasses, but your wife would in all probability have been blinded as well as permanently disfigured."

Miss Hammett was the first chemical burns victim in the world to be treated with a revolutionary technique for setting skin grafts. Surgeons at the Frenchay Hospital in Bristol used strips of "plastic skin" developed in America to encourage her own skin to regrow.

The artificial skin, called Integra, costs £1,000 for a 6in strip. It consists of a layer of silicon on top of collagen sponge. The strips were placed on her face and kept there for three weeks while her own facial tissue regenerated within the layer of sponge. The silicon covering was then peeled off and skin from her legs grafted onto her face.

She had to wear a protective mask for months to protect the grafts and says the pain was so intense she spent days drifting in and out of consciousness.

Andrew Bird, her consultant plastic surgeon, said: "She was aware she was setting herself up for some pretty revolutionary treatment." He said she had made an amazing psychological recovery and praised her courage in being "prepared to show herself to the world as an example of what can be done, and also some of the problems."

He added: "She is a certain type of person who is going to get on with things."

His plan went wrong because Mrs Humphrey was out at the moment the attacker, who has yet to be caught, arrived at the family home. Instead of Mrs Humphrey, it was Beverley Hammett, a babysitter, then 19, who answered the door and had the acid thrown in her face.

Despite Humphrey's denials, a jury at Exeter Crown Court found him guilty by unanimous verdict in less than three hours.

Judge Graham Cottle told him: "You have been found guilty of the most heinous crime. There are no words to describe the character of a man who behaves as you did. Your intention was that, if you could not have your wife, you would make sure no one else would want her. This was a cold, calculating and premeditated attack. It was not a sudden loss of control. It was planned in such a way as to ensure, as you believed it, that you would get away with it. There has been no hint of remorse. You are an evil man."

Before the attack, Humphrey set himself up with an alibi by arranging a blind date with two sisters in a country pub eight miles from his wife's home in Seaton, east Devon.

Police who arrested him shortly after the attack found two drums of nitric acid in the boot of his car; they were due to be delivered to a client of his cleaning supplies company the next day. The tamper-proof seals had been broken and the chemical inside slightly diluted as Humphrey replaced the acid with water.

After the trial, Devon and Cornwall police said they would investigate the relationship between Mrs Humphrey and a married police officer who worked on the inquiry. She had known the officer before the attack but had since started an affair with him. In court she admitted she was having a relationship but did not name the officer.

Keith Portlock, the Deputy Chief Constable, said: "The force is not able to confirm the substance of these allegations at this stage as it has only just been brought to our attention, but the matter has been noted by the Chief Constable and will be investigated in accordance with our procedures."

Miss Hammett said of the verdict: "This is a great relief. I believe justice has been done at last."



Beverley Hammett has had nine operations on her face since the acid attack

Husband gets 12 years for 'heinous crime'

BY SIMON DE BRUXELLES

PETER HUMPHREY was an obsessively jealous husband who set up a bungled acid attack that left his wife's teenage babysitter scarred for life. Yesterday he was jailed for 12 years.

Humphrey, 53, swayed in the dock and had to be supported by a prison officer when he was convicted by a jury of eight men and four women of hiring an unidentified man to throw concentrated nitric acid in the face of his estranged wife, Susan, when he found out that she had a new boyfriend.

His plan went wrong because Mrs Humphrey was out at the moment the attacker, who has yet to be caught, arrived at the family home. Instead of Mrs Humphrey, it was Beverley Hammett, a babysitter, then 19, who answered the door and had the acid thrown in her face.

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Humphrey arranged alibi for time of attack

Head teacher wins damages over asbestos

BY DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

A HEAD TEACHER suffering from cancer after being exposed to asbestos at school yesterday won damages estimated at £150,000.

Brenda Cope sued Cheshire County Council and Chester City Council after contracting asbestosis during inspections of a school boiler. Mrs Cope, now head of an infants school near Warrington, which was not the subject of the legal action, accepted the damages after the councils admitted liability at the High Court in Manchester.

Mrs Cope had called members of teaching and clerical staff at her former, unnamed, school to give evidence on her behalf. The case revolved around the replacement of a school boiler in the early 1970s. Mrs Cope was exposed to asbestos during the examinations.

Shortly before the hearing was to begin, lawyers for the two councils agreed a settlement with Mrs Cope's representatives. Mr Justice Holland agreed the undisclosed damages in a brief hearing and ordered that the defendants paid the costs of the action.

A spokesman for Cheshire County Council said later: "The case relates back to the early 1970s at a school which had a boiler replaced. As head of school she was responsible for inspecting all work carried out on the school."

"Whilst the head would not normally be involved in this work and although she had only minimal exposure to asbestos we believe that it was sufficient for her to contract asbestosis. Teachers are no longer responsible for inspecting work."

Pythons take strife of Brian to High Court

BY PHILIP DELVES BROUGHTON

THE stars of Monty Python yesterday accused the distributors of their film *The Life of Brian* of treating them with as little respect as they themselves had shown the Messiah.

Python (Monty) Pictures, which is owned by the surviving members of the Flying Circus, is suing Channel 4 and Paragon Entertainment Corporation, of Canada.

The Pythons — John Cleese, Eric Idle, Terry Jones, Michael Palin and Terry Gilliam — were in America as the case began at the High Court, encouraging speculation that they might renounce for a tour.

James Munby, QC, their barrister, told Mr Justice Rattee that the licence to show *The Life of Brian* in Britain had been sold to Channel 4 by Paragon at an absurdly low price and on improper terms.

The judge said he had not seen the film, which has earned more than £40 million since its release in 1978, but knew of the controversy it had caused. It tells the story of an unwilling messiah in the Holy Land 2,000 years ago, and critics said it was blasphemous.

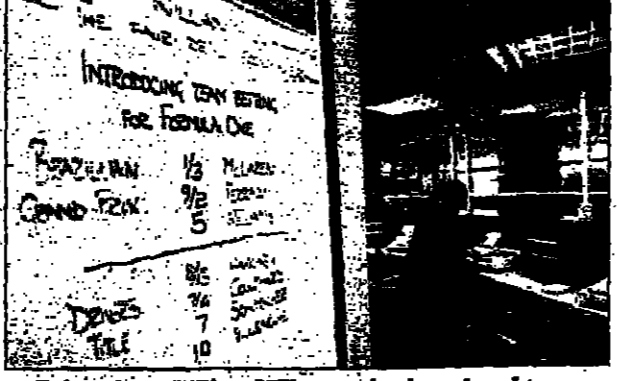
Mr Munby said that Handmade Films had agreed to fund the film for half the profits and Python agreed to hand over the copyright of the screenplay. The contract allowed Python access to the accounts to assess sales and the right to refuse cuts demanded by local censors.

Formula One betting altered

BY JOHN GOODBODY

BETTING shops are to offer odds on teams, as well as individual drivers, for the first time in Formula One races after the secret agreement by the McLaren team to fix the result of the Australian Grand Prix on Sunday.

Bookmakers and McLaren were bombarded with complaints from the public yesterday. Some people had bet up to £1,000 on David Coulthard winning the race, only for the British driver to allow his Finnish teammate, Mika Hakkinen, to finish first.



Point taken: William Hill yesterday introduced team betting for the Brazilian Grand Prix on March 29

made a private pact that whoever was in the lead at the first bend would be allowed to take first place at the finish. In Britain, where about £4 million is bet annually on the world championship, William Hill said no-one outside McLaren had known about the agreement. Hakkinen had been quoted at 13-8 and Coulthard at 9-4. Graham

Sharpe, Hill's spokesman, said that punters should have taken the possibility of such a deal into account because the practice has been commonplace for years.

He called for team instructions to be announced publicly. However, he said that betting on teams would be introduced for the first time for the Brazilian Grand Prix on March 29. Ladbrokes is also considering introducing team betting.

Mel Goldberg, a sports solicitor with Epstein Grower and Michael Freeman, said yesterday that, under the Betting and Gaming Lotteries Act of 1963, it was possible that punters could sue both McLaren and Coulthard.

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Motor racing, pages 50, 52

WHEN ON FAS WILL

Diana trust gives £1m each to her Big Six charities

By KATHRYN KNIGHT AND DANIEL MCGRODY

THE six favourite charities of Diana, Princess of Wales, were told last night that they would receive about £1 million each from the first £13 million awards from the fund set up in her memory.

Trustees answered criticism that they had taken too long to hand out the £40 million by choosing charities and causes dearest to the Princess at the time of her death.

About 100 more charities will be told today that they are to receive smaller awards. The majority reflect the Princess's interest in children and vulnerable youngsters.

Last night's awards went to the "Big Six" - projects involving children, the homeless, leprosy and Aids. Many are expected to bear her name as a permanent memorial.

A special award will be made to the victims of landmines, which was of particular concern to the Princess, but the trustees have yet to agree how best the money should be spent. No one charity will benefit and instead a special conference will be held involving agencies working with victims to decide which local projects which should receive awards. A spokesman said: "The Princess was very keen in the area of rehabilitation,

TICKET RUSH

Tea million scratch-cards bearing the signature of Diana, Princess of Wales, went on sale yesterday to "tremendous demand". The cards, designed by the pools firm Littlewoods, will raise money for the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund. Each card, with the signature over a pink rose, will raise 20 pence for the fund, with Littlewoods matching the top prize of £25,000 with a similar donation. The scheme was launched at a newsagents in Greenford, West London, where 100 tickets were sold within four hours.

employment training and help to families of victims and we would wish to emphasise this in the awards we will give."

Trustees said last night that future awards, the next of which will be announced this summer, will encompass the same themes.

Charities such as Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, Centrepoin, the English National Ballet, Royal Marsden Hospital, National Aids Trust and the Leprosy

Mission were told exactly how much they were getting yesterday.

There was initial confusion last night when the nine trustees of the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, who include the Princess's sister, Lady Sarah McCorquodale, appeared unsure about when and how the awards should be announced. There was also a dispute about the decision to give the announcement to a television network on an exclusive basis.

One of the major recipients is the Great Ormond Street hospital, where the money will fund a radical new project for child care in a specially designed community centre in London.

The Centrepoin charity for the homeless is to get funding for an outreach project near King's Cross in London. The Princess, who was a regular visitor to Centrepoin's projects, had agreed shortly before her death to open the sheltered accommodation for young homeless. She was also planning to take her sons to visit the refuge.

A grant will be given to the English National Ballet to help fund three areas of particular concern to the Princess. These include the creation of new productions for young performers, helping disadvantaged groups of schoolchildren to visit the ballet, and assisting in the professional welfare of dancers.

Over 4000 charities applied to the fund from all over the world.

The trustees yesterday defended the seven-month wait for the first payouts saying they had to agree specific rules about which charities should benefit. "What took so long was to agree the rules of how this fund should work," a spokesman said.

Fund trustees have not decided how quickly they will disperse all the money it has so far received. The sales of the tribute album recorded in her memory could eventually bring in £100 million and the income from sales of sanctioned memorabilia and souvenirs is described as "incalculable".



Ffion Hague attended a traditional day for monarchy at Westminster Abbey with her husband, the Tory leader

Blair backs reforms as Queen enjoys a day full of tradition

By ANDREW PIERCE AND ALAN HAMILTON

TONY BLAIR yesterday signalled his support for the modernisers at Buckingham Palace, led by the Prince of Wales, who are pressing for sweeping changes to the monarchy.

The rapidly evolving proposals to improve the image of the Royal Family is expected to dominate discussions at the Prime Minister's regular audience with the Queen today. Downing Street threw its weight behind the pace of change which has caused a deepening rift with the palace old guard, apparently led by the Duke of Edinburgh.

Buckingham Palace dismissed reports that the Duke of Edinburgh was opposed to changes and said stories of a new wave of reforms were "mere speculation".

The Queen, meanwhile, took a thoroughly traditional view of her monarchical role yesterday when she stepped into the forecourt of Buckingham Palace to hand a gold and silver baton to a Malaysian relay runner for the first leg of its journey to



Tony Blair is backing plans to modernise the Palace

this year's Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur.

Teams of runners will carry the baton to Malaysia, where its arrival in September will signal the start of the 16th games. The Queen, who also attended the annual Commonwealth Day service in Westminster Abbey, along with Tony and Cherie Blair and William and Ffion Hague, will close the games during a visit to Malaysia and Brunei in the autumn. The forecourt ceremony

was a brief interlude of order and familiarity during a period of fevered speculation over the future style of monarchy. As the Queen met games officials, and British and Malaysian athletes who will compete in the most important world games after the Olympics, it was noticeable that the great majority of men bowed as they shook hands, and all the women curtsied, with the exception of the track-suited Kelly Holmes, the England run-

ner, who declined to bend a reverential knee. Bowing and curtsying are now officially out, according to a letter sent by the Palace to Lord Lieutenants throughout Britain two weeks ago. The Queen has never insisted on it, but as part of a major review of royal style in the wake of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, Palace officials thought it prudent to issue a reminder.

After a weekend of intense speculation following last month's meeting of the Way Ahead Group, the Royal Family's strategic planning committee, it became clear yesterday that the Queen is in favour of a review of almost all aspects of the running of her Household, in the hope of pre-empting government pressure to slim down the whole apparatus of monarchy. Palace officials are aware that, when serious discussions on the future of the Civil List begin with the Treasury next year, there will be strong political pressure for a much leaner monarchy. Modern monarchy, page 19 Court, page 20

Head says politicians betray schools on morality

By DAVID CHARTER EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

A LEADER of independent-school headteachers criticised the morality of top politicians yesterday for letting down schools which try to promote strong values.

David Crawford appeared to condemn the Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, the Conservative leader William Hague and Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, in a speech to the annual conference of the Society of Headmasters and Headmistresses of Independent Schools.

Mr Crawford, chairman of the society and head of Colston's Collegiate School, Bristol, said that schools were being left to take the moral lead, but it was "immensely hypocritical" that "standards tolerated in other walks of life are not tolerated amongst heads or teachers".

"Without naming any politicians, he told the conference at Grantham, Lincolnshire: "It is now accepted that a Cabinet minister can leave his wife, take up with another woman and expect the taxpayer to foot the bill for accompanied visits to other shores." Mr Cook's marriage broke up over his affair with his secretary.

Mr Crawford added: "Co-habitation at party conferences by unmarried members is all right, and ordering £8,000 beds for official apartments is not untoward. Would we retain our jobs as heads if we behaved similarly?"

Mr Hague shared a Blackpool hotel room at last year's party conference with his then fiancée, Ffion Jenkins. Beds costing £8,000 are reportedly included in the refurbishment of the Lord Chancellor's private apartments at the Palace of Westminster.

Mr Crawford asked: "Who is taking the moral lead? Who is setting the example? Is it the Church? Is it the politicians? Is it the Royal Family? Is it the police and judiciary? With the erosion of the nuclear family, it all too often seems to come down to schools and their teachers in isolation. Society and parents should do all in their power to support schools."

Earl defends move to sell souvenirs

By DANIEL MCGRODY

EARL SPENCER yesterday defended his decision to sell his own souvenirs of his sister to the thousands visiting her grave on his Althorp estate in Northamptonshire.

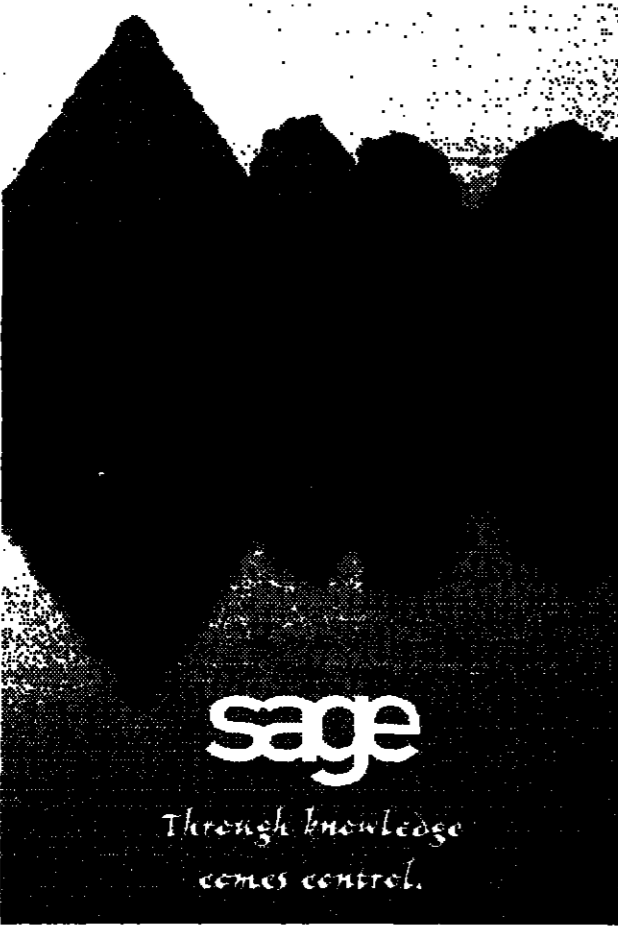
After condemning the burgeoning market in "tacky" memorabilia that has grown up around the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, the earl denied last night that he was cashing in on her memory. He has instructed the local firms who are to produce the souvenirs and gifts that none must

feature the Princess's face or name.

Nor will any of the designs carry logos referring to the Queen of Hearts or any other of the Princess's popular nicknames. "Every penny is going to the memorial fund, and better to create a range of memorabilia that reflects her family estate," a spokesman said yesterday.

The logo for the souvenirs, which will include plates, cups, jewellery and key fobs, will feature the Althorp crest.

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THE TIMES TUESDAY MARCH 10 1998

Cash-strapped opera goes shopping at M & S

It's arrivederci Armani - Dalya Alberge reports on more than just a change of tune from Covent Garden

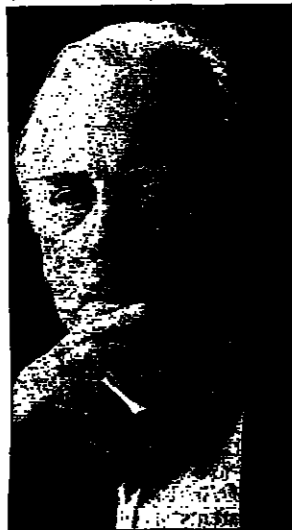
A SHOPPING trip to Marks & Spencer brought the Royal Opera House a little closer to becoming the people's opera yesterday. They had wanted their singers to be dressed by Giorgio Armani.

They went to the M & S branch at Marble Arch in search of outfits for nine singers in a revival of a modern-dress version of *Costa*. An original production in 1995 had costumes by Armani, but the new cast is smaller and slimmer - like the opera company's finances - and the Italian designer refused to allow them to alter earlier creations.

Armani was reportedly unhappy about Covent Garden reusing costumes designed for specific singers, although he was paid £18,000 for 50 costumes in 1995 and another £18,000 for a new set in 1997, and benefited from publicity for outfits that came straight from two summer collections. His contract stipulates that he has complete control over copyright. And no fashion designer likes to be seen in another season's clothes.

As three singers - Barbara Fritoli, Inger Dam Jensen and Enkelejda Shkosa - toured M & S, the benefits became clear. A grey suit was £120; one bearing an Armani label costs £1,000-plus. The total M & S bill of £1,000 for all nine singers came to the equivalent of a single Armani suit and a fraction of his evening-wear; his beaded evening-dresses cost nearly £6,000.

As the singers disappeared



Giorgio Armani's suits cost £1,000-plus



"Did you find a nice blouse at M & S, dear?"

into the changing-rooms, the atmosphere became rather prickly: there was one version of the Armani saga from the opera's spokeswoman, Judy Grahame, and another from Marja Walters, a freelance consultant employed by Armani and other designers. She was paid by the Royal Opera House to advise on *Costa*. Having partnered them with Mr Armani originally, she agreed to find something to "complement" the originals.

No, Ms Walters told Ms Grahame, Mr Armani was never asked to do a revival. Anyway, taking in the costumes would not have worked, she stressed.

"What I was told," Ms Grahame replied, "was that Mr Armani was not happy for the costumes to be altered to fit the new singers."

"This is bad," Ms Walters returned, "really bad. And not correct." She moved away abruptly.

The production's director, Jonathan Miller, said that he went to Armani because he wanted elegant modern costumes to take the opera out of the 18th century, and because it was just round the corner. But it was never intended to be an Armani fashion show, as the critics suggested: "It got out of control, both for Armani and the ROH, until it eventually became 'The Armani production of *Costa*'."

The difference between Armani and M & S, said Lisa Armstrong, fashion features director for *Vogue*, lies "in the cut and the fabric - but from the back of the stalls, I doubt you're going to notice it."

She added: "Armani is famous for understated clothes, so it's fair as if you're getting a lot

of embellishment for that money. It's the quite subtle things. You're not going to get that in M & S.

"You cannot say M & S is as good. It would be like saying a Porsche worth £60,000 when a Mini gets you from A to B. But I don't understand why they went to Armani. It's lovely to wear, understated and quiet. I'm not sure how they fit into the theatre. I've seen his costumes for dancers. That makes sense - the cut and the way they drape."

The new production is at the Shaftesbury Theatre in London from March 17 to 28.

Both Ms Walters and Ms Grahame stressed that everyone would like to work together again on another production. Certainly, the publicity generated by Covent Garden worked wonders for Armani sales. Ms Walters said they were besieged by people who had seen the production and wanted to know where they could buy those outfits. Whether the same will happen with M & S remains to be seen.

Arts, pages 37-39



Cutting their coat according to their cloth: Inger Dam Jensen helping Barbara Fritoli in front of the changing room mirror yesterday

Saint Laurent shows how less is more

By Grace Bradberry, Style Editor

PARIS prêt-à-porter week began yesterday with two more famous French fashion houses facing a foreign invasion.

Marc Jacobs, the New York "grunge" designer, brought his laid-back attitude to the first Louis Vuitton catwalk show, while the Belgian designer Martin Margiela took over at Hermès.

With so many of the capital's citadels now stormed, it is increasingly left to Yves Saint Laurent to fly the tricolore.

Yesterday France's leading couturier, in the midst of celebrating 40 years as a designer, had taken a battering of his own. His right arm was strapped to his body, having been broken in a fall at the shoulder and elbow.

The collection was his best for several seasons. A floor-length cape in red-felted wool with raw edges looked modern, as did a dress, plain at the front but with revers collars at the back, a pastiche of his famous *le smoking*.

His collection had a relaxed feel - with Jodie

Kidd ending the show in a bell-sleeved dress harking back to the 61-year-old designer's hippie late past.

But if less looks more, at Saint Laurent, many thought that it looked simply less at Louis Vuitton. Marc Jacobs' debut collection for the leather goods company appeared to draw lukewarm response from the audience.

Jacobs specialises in luxurious but understated clothes that are slightly distressed. True to form, his rubberised cotton coats, which will sell for hundreds of pounds, looked slightly crumpled.

Cashmere sweaters with turn-up hems were sleek with a strong enough signature for customers in search of status symbols. But the silk-stretch shirts were so simple that they can surely attract only those who like their luxury discreet in the extreme.

As for the shoes, they were so laid back they were actually slippers - flat, backless mules not likely to make it onto many London streets in the middle of next winter.



Yves Saint Laurent, with strapped broken arm, is congratulated after his ready-to-wear show.

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Housing protester who shot at JCB is jailed

By A CORRESPONDENT

A MAN who shot at a JCB driver to protect hedgehogs threatened by a new housing development was jailed for seven months yesterday. Gerard Counts, 38, shot out the window of the JCB and also set fire to the first house to be built. Perth Sheriff Court heard.

When he was arrested, Counts told the police he was acting on behalf of the hedgehogs in the area. He said they had no one to represent them as their homes were destroyed. He said he was taking a home for a hedgehog by burning down the half-built house at St Madoc's, Perthshire, last April.

Counts had shot at the vehicle being driven by John Turnbull two weeks later because, the court was told, the drone from the construction site had made him "itchy".

John Wheatley, the Sheriff, jailed Counts for three months on the fire-raising charge and four months for the shooting.

BSE inquiry calls for extra time as evidence mounts

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE public inquiry into BSE is to be extended by six months at the request of the presiding judge because of the growing mountain of evidence that his committee will have to scale.

Opening the inquiry in London yesterday, Lord Justice Phillips said that he had decided the original December 31 deadline set by the Government could not be met.

Downing Street immediately granted the extension. Lord Justice Phillips said: "I am not prepared to contemplate a report that is superficial because it has been too rushed, and I do not believe that those who are anxiously looking forward to receiving this report would wish us to sacrifice thoroughness for speed."

The inquiry has already accumulated hundreds of documents and scientific papers relating to "mad cow" disease and received 500 submissions of evidence. Among those called to give written evidence or to appear before the inquiry will be farmers, consumers, representatives of the beef and

food industries and the retail trade and relatives of people who have died of new-variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

To date 23 people have developed the fatal degenerative brain disease, which is incurable. The new-variant strain differs from the usual form in striking younger people.

Lord Justice Phillips said the main aim of the inquiry was to assess "the adequacy of response" of ministers, government officials and scientists to the emerging evidence about BSE "in the light of contemporary knowledge".

The opening was attended by David and Dorothy Churchill, whose son, Stephen, died aged 19 on May 21, 1995, the first known victim of new-variant CJD. Mr Churchill, who led the campaign for a public inquiry, said: "We are pleased by the six-month extension because we feared the inquiry might not have enough time to do a proper job."

The first witness to give evidence will be Roger Tomkins, the father of Clare Tomkins, who contracted new-variant CJD last year despite having been a vegetarian for ten years. He and two vets, Colin Whitaker and David Bee, who examined what are now recognised to have been the first cases of BSE, will appear today.

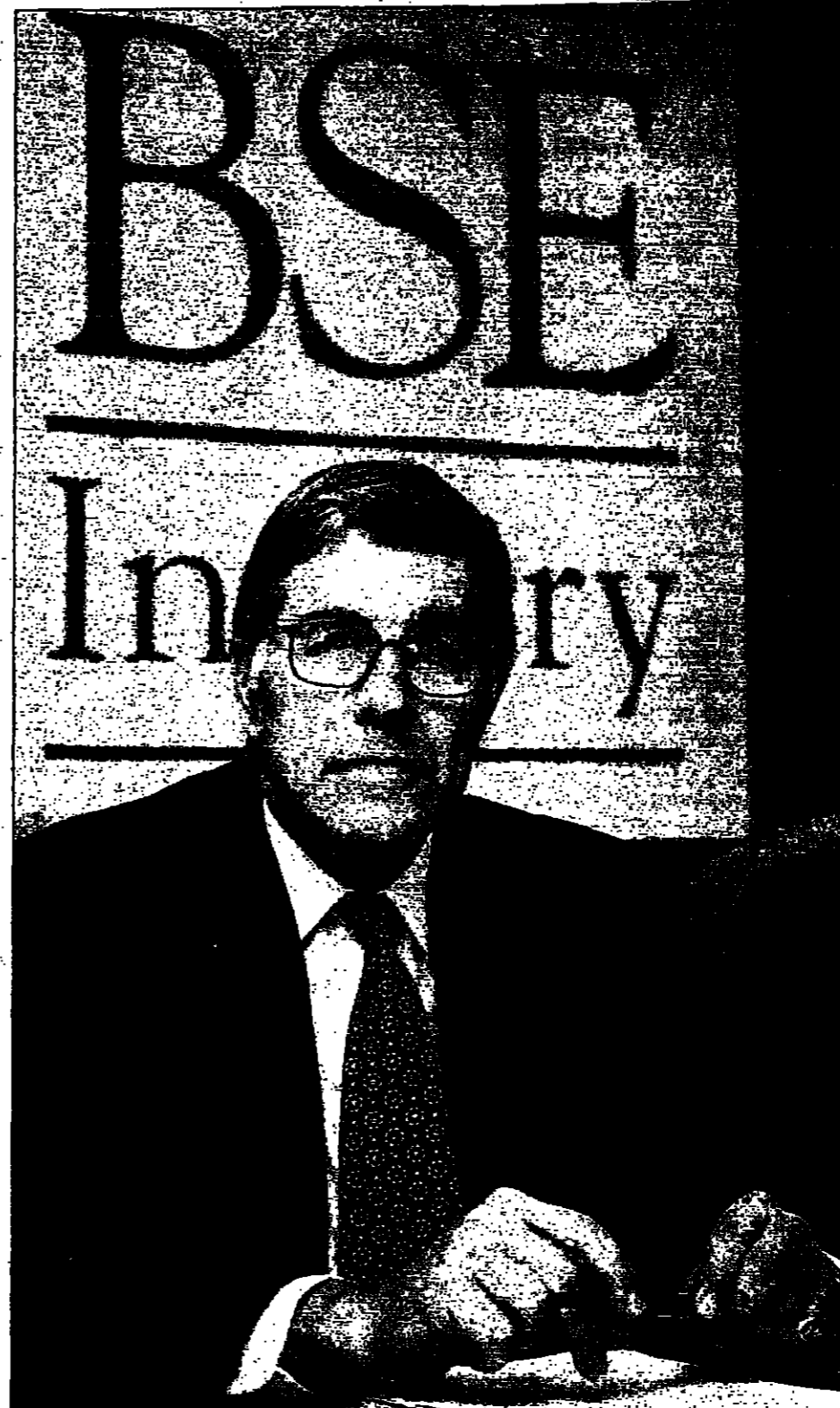
One of the main tasks of the inquiry will be to examine why the ban on human consumption of potentially infected parts of cattle carcasses was not introduced until four years after the first diagnosis of spongiform encephalopathy in a cow in late 1985.

The inquiry yesterday heard an eloquent appeal for justice from David Body, a solicitor representing the families of new-variant CJD victims, who read out a statement on behalf of the Human BSE Foundation, a body formed by the families last year. The families said they were not seeking scapegoats but wanted to know the individuals responsible for giving advice and making decisions during the period covered by the inquiry, which ends on March 20, 1996, the date when the probable link between BSE and new-variant CJD was first publicly admitted.

Mr Body said a "central concern" was to establish whether officials had ever made a judgment that "the risk of human contamination [from BSE] could be regarded as remote until it happened" and that "some lives might be a price worth paying" to avoid economic damage to the farming industry.



Dorothy and David Churchill, whose son Stephen died of new-variant CJD, arriving for the inquiry



Opening move: Lord Justice Phillips said the inquiry needed an extra six months

IN BRIEF

Stay sober for the soundest slumber

A bedtime whisky, brandy or liqueur is almost certain to prevent the desired effect of a sound night's sleep, researchers say. The National Sleep Foundation, which interviewed 1,000 travellers in hotels around the world, said that, although alcohol caused drowsiness, it disrupted the deeper levels of the sleep cycle.

Broker jailed

A violent stockbroker was jailed for a year and told to pay £10,000 compensation at Southwark Crown Court. Jean-Paul Clunier, 45, a judo blackbelt, admitted grievous bodily harm against Kim Kelly, 35, his ex-fiancée.

Town's tax rise

Ultrasound Town Council has raised its council tax precept by £34 per person to cover a £100,000 deficit after it was allegedly misled about its finances by its clerk, Barry Bradshaw. Police and the district auditor are investigating.

Wave of interest

The interest created by the film Titanic has led to a surge of inquiries about the 1,106-member British Titanic Society. Steve Rigby, the secretary, said his postbag was filled with applications to join or requests for information.

Free transfer

Roostwood, a private school in Andover, Hampshire, has offered to provide free education for Lolla Lucas, 15, who left the grant-maintained Castledown School at Ludgershall, Wiltshire, because of bullying.

CORRECTION

The architect of the new British Library is Sir Colin St John Wilson: we regret reporting his name incorrectly on March 6.

Watchdog hits stop button on offensive faxes

By LIN JENKINS

A TELEPHONE watchdog has banned a company from sending unsolicited smutty faxes to homes, schools and businesses after receiving hundreds of complaints.

Up to two million faxes, some with the titles "All about sex" and "Poo talk", were sent during the night to promote Fax Data Services. Com-

plaints included a hospice, a charity and several schools. One said that the fax "was worse than receiving an obscene phone call".

Nearly 350 complaints were made to the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services, which yesterday said that it had banned the company from operating any premium-rate service for one year. The 11

premium-rate services run by the company, which cost customers £1 a minute, have been cut off.

The directors will also be required to give assurances that they will not operate any premium-rate service that breaches the committee's code of practice.

The company, of Wimpole Street, London, had already been fined £1,000 for sending the material, and

had been advised by the committee how to avoid breaching its code of practice. Most of the faxes were advertisements for "Funny Faxes" which the company said could be sent to amuse friends and colleagues.

The committee said the exact number of offensive faxes sent was not clear. The service provider said that two million had been distributed, but also claimed that total

revenue was just £250, which suggested a surprisingly low take-up rate for the service.

The company was found to have failed to ensure that its faxes did not reach an inappropriate audience and to have sent material likely to "cause grave or widespread offence". Sarah Harrison, director of the committee, said: "We regard the breaches as very serious."

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Vodka-drinking driver jailed for killing cyclists

Seven years for alcoholic who ran down three men as he drove with bottle in hand, writes Paul Wilkinson

AN ALCOHOLIC who killed three members of a family as he drove with a bottle of vodka in his hand was jailed for seven years yesterday.

Andrew Armstrong was more than three times over the drink-drive limit when he ran into the three men from behind as they cycled on a country road five days before Christmas last year. Alan Harrison and his brother Bryan died with their brother-in-law, Don Smith. Raymond Walls, Mr Smith's son-in-law, suffered a broken leg and hip.

Armstrong, 36, from Seaton Sluice, Northumberland, admitted three charges of causing death by dangerous driving at Newcastle Crown Court. He was banned from driving for 15 years.

Outside court, Peter Harrison, a brother of two of the victims, said: "The actual time he has to serve in prison will not change what happened. We knew ten years was the maximum he could get because he never left the scene and he's shown genuine signs of remorse."

"As a family we have formed no opinion of the man, because we do not know him and we have tried to keep it that way. There isn't any anger at the moment, but there may be in time."

"It is not just losing one

person, or three separate people, it is the loss of three sections of a big family. It has left a hole in everyone's lives and in everything we do."

Paul Sloan, for the prosecution, said that Brian Harrison, 38, and his brother Alan, 33, had gone out to ride a bike. Mr Smith, 39, and Mr Walls, 25, near their home in Blyth, Northumberland. They were all wearing reflective clothing and had bright lights.

Armstrong, a former lift engineer, had already drunk almost half a bottle of vodka in his allotment shed when he began to drive his Ford Mondeo. Moments before he struck the riders, he almost ran over a jogger, Mr Slater, said: "The jogger noticed that the accused had a half-bottle of spirits in his hand, which he was holding close to his mouth."

"The cyclists were travelling in single file. They were clearly visible... but the Mondeo ploughed into the back of them without even slowing down or braking."

"The three deceased suffered catastrophic injuries and died instantly. Mr Walls tried to stand up and realises he had broken his leg. Police say the damage to the car was consistent with it travelling at 60mph on impact."

A breath test showed 115 micrograms of alcohol in 100 millilitres of Armstrong's breath, the legal limit is 35mcg. A vodka bottle minus the cap was recovered from his car.

Armstrong, who has a daughter aged 8, told police that he drank four and a half bottles of vodka a week. He said he had not seen the cyclists until they were on his bonnet. "I should not have driven a car. I just wish I could turn the clock back."

Tim Hewin, mitigating for Armstrong, said: "He is genuinely remorseful, devastated and terrified by what he has inflicted on the families of the victims. He descended into the world of alcoholism in 1994

through the onset of depression. Shortly after that, he lost his parents very quickly and lost all confidence."

He tried to do something about his drinking and seemed to be conquering his addiction, but in the weeks before this happened he had relapsed. He tried to disguise this from his wife and daughter by drinking away from the house."

Judge Christopher Hodson told Armstrong: "Your thoroughly outrageous and irresponsible behaviour has killed three admirable and hard-working men and wrecked the lives of their loved ones and your family too."

"Any sentence passed by me will be seen by the families of the deceased, as inadequate and, in many respects, they would be right."



Raymond Walls, above, survived the crash which killed, from top right, Don Smith, Alan and Bryan Harrison



Policeman four times over limit walks free

A TRAFFIC policeman who turned to drink after his wife left him for a neighbour escaped jail yesterday for driving while nearly four times over the limit.

Desmond Smullen, 39, had to resign from Thames Valley Police last Friday after admitting drink-driving at an earlier hearing. Magistrates at Bicester, Oxfordshire, yesterday imposed a 150-hour community service order.

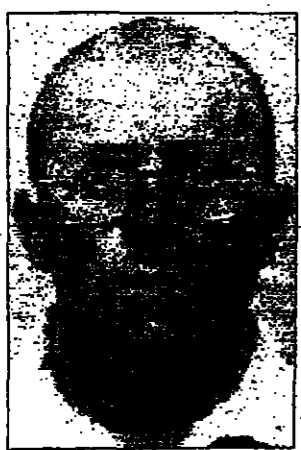
The off-duty officer had 132 micrograms of alcohol in his breath — the legal limit is 35mcg — after he had crashed his Ford Fiesta into another car early on January 25.

Paul Redpath, in mitigation, said: "Mr Smullen is angry with himself and ashamed of what he has done. His wife of 11 years left him for his next-door neighbour and he's been involved in a bitter divorce. He has lost everything important in his life."

Magistrates told Smullen that he avoided a custodial sentence only because of his excellent pre-sentence reports. He was banned from driving for three years.

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Armstrong hid drinking from wife and daughter

New warning over safety of holiday ferries

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH holidaymakers are warned today that their safety may be at risk on ferry trips in the Mediterranean. Lower levels of safety on many popular ferry routes around Italy and Greece could put passengers in danger, according to the magazine *Holiday Which?*

The consumer watchdog says that ferry safety changes, scheduled to be brought in by 2002, must be introduced immediately to ensure that all European ferries meet one standard and passengers are better protected.

Many ferries travelling from British ports do not have to comply with the latest Stockholm Agreement standards until 2002, but the magazine says that is too late. However, it concedes that British ferries are generally of a higher safety standard than those on Mediterranean routes and suffer only minor failings. Half the 38 ferries examined at UK and Baltic

ports were of good standard, the remainder satisfactory.

The magazine says that, despite pressure to improve safety since the *Herald of Free Enterprise* capsized off Zeebrugge in 1987, millions of Britons will travel on ferries this summer that do not meet adequate standards.

The ferries and routes listed as unsatisfactory were the *Sarlatia Regina* between Livorno in Italy and Golfo Aranci in Sardinia, and in Greece, the *Lissos* from Piraeus to Chania in Crete, the *Express Apollon* from Piraeus to Paros, and the *Milos Express* from Piraeus to Sifnos.

"It is unacceptable to have two standards of safety in Europe," Patricia Natus, the editor of *Holiday Which?* said. "Mediterranean countries should be pressured to adopt the Stockholm Agreement standards as soon as possible for the safety of all ferry users."



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Relatives who fall ill after tragedies may get damages

By Frances Gibb, Legal Correspondent

PEOPLE who suffer mental illness after witnessing or hearing of a relative's death — even on television or radio — should be able to claim damages, the Government's law reform body says today.

The recommendation by the Law Commission would mean that relatives of the football fans killed in the 1989 Hillsborough disaster, who failed to win damages because they did not physically witness what happened, could be awarded compensation.

Under the proposed reform, it would still be necessary for claimants to have close ties with the persons injured, killed or put in danger. But they would no longer have to be close in time and space to the accident — the so-called proximity test applied by the courts; nor would they have to witness events through their own senses.

Claimants would have to have suffered psychiatric illness in line with the current criteria applied by doctors and the courts. Andrew Burrows, the Law Commissioner in

charge of the project, said: "It is not enough merely to have suffered grief, upset or anxiety — in other words, mere mental distress. We are talking about something much more significant with a greater intensity of symptoms."

The relatives of the Hillsborough victims sued South Yorkshire Police and the case went all the way to the House of Lords. Relatives at the stadium who suffered psychiatric illnesses were able to claim damages, as were the police officers who carried out the rescue work, but relatives who saw the tragedy on television and later identified the bodies were not able to claim. The courts ruled they were not close to the disaster and did not perceive it with their unaided senses.

The Law Lords also laid down new guidelines, stating that there must be a close tie of love and affection, a closeness to the accident in time and space and "direct perception" of the accident. Professor Burrows said, however, that the law needed reform: it pro-

duced results that were "widely regarded as arbitrary and unjust". He said there were conflicting views on the reform and the Law Commission had opted for a mid-way course.

The proposals, accompanied by a draft Bill, would not run the risk of creating uncontrolled liability, he said. He thought it unlikely that broadcasters would find themselves at the receiving end of damages claims just because they had persisted with broadcasting details of a disaster.

"We did not specifically look at this," Professor Burrows said, "but it seems very unlikely, because the defendant in these cases is the person or body who actually caused the death, injury or impairment of another and a broadcaster would not be causing it."

Any claimant would have to show that a broadcaster owed a duty of care to an injured person, and such a claim would be likely to fail, Professor Burrows said.

Law, page 43

Met cuts pensions of convicted policemen

By Stewart Tandler, Crime Correspondent

THE Metropolitan Police is acting to curtail the pensions of convicted officers as part of its moves against police crime.

The force has asked Home Office ministers to revoke a large part of the pensions due to two officers jailed for corruption. A further four officers could be affected by the measure, which has already been used to cut by three quarters the index-linked pension due to a former Scotland Yard accountant who stole £5 million from a police fund.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, is currently looked at the case of Ronald Palumbo, 32, who was based at Stoke

Newington, North London, and is serving ten years for his part in a £2 million cocaine smuggling ring, and the file on John Donald, 37, a former detective constable, is still with officials. Donald was jailed for 11 years for offering to sell to Kenneth Noye, who is wanted in connection with a road-rage killing, details of an investigation into his activities.

Palumbo, who had served ten years in the force, is due a pension of more than £3,600 a year. Donald, who had been a police officer for more than 17 years, is due £6,600.

A senior Scotland Yard officer said a small percentage of

the pension might be left for a former officer's family. "It is not something we would do lightly, but in criminal cases we will go for it. The message will be that these officers are not going to escape with their pensions," he said.

In the case of Anthony Williams, the corrupt accountant, the pension he built up over 36 years will be cut from £18,000 a year to about £6,000 when he leaves jail.

The 27,000-strong force and 14,000 civilian staff are being warned that the same policy will be applied to anyone convicted for any crime apart from a motoring offence.



Monster price: an assistant lifts an original film poster of King Kong, which fetched £28,750 at auction yesterday.

Adventist school wins fight for state funding

By David Charter, Education Correspondent

THE Seventh Day Adventist Church, which rejects the theory of evolution, has won state funding for a secondary school after a long campaign.

The decision of David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, to award grant-maintained status to John Loughborough School in Tottenham, North London is expected to bring it at least £700,000 of public money a year. Parents at the school, where GCSE results are better than at many of Haringey council's schools, currently pay fees of more than £2,000 a year. A September 10 fee will be charged.

Bernie Grant, the local MP who had campaigned for the school, called the decision "a triumph for the black community". Mr Grant said: "The establishment of the school sprang from the deep dissatisfaction which many black Christian teachers and parents felt with mainstream education. While Catholic and Church of England schools have been publicly funded, these parents have had to pay, which was discriminatory."

To win state funding, schools must demonstrate that they teach the full ten-subject national curriculum. However, they are free to modify the religious education syllabus.

Clinton Valley, the head teacher, was "overjoyed" and hoped that the school, which now has 139 pupils, would soon be taking 250. Working-class parents had found it hard to meet the fees, he added.

Robert Ashby, of the British Humanist Association, opposed the move because "children should not be brought up to believe in only one view, such as Creationism".

But the church's education director, Keith Davidson, said that the national curriculum, including science, was taught with a "faith dimension" in each subject. "As far as the Darwinian theory of evolution is concerned, we teach it, but we don't accept it," he said. "From an academic point of view, we present the Darwinian theory, but we promote the Creationist perspective."

Tony Brockman, of the Haringey branch of the National Union of Teachers, was astonished that the Government had granted grant-maintained status to any school, "let alone a school which is denominational".

David Hart, of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "I don't see any reason why a school serving a minority religion should not be given grant-maintained status if the Secretary of State believes it to be justified."

Bidders scale heights for King Kong poster

ONE of only four surviving posters for the 1933 film King Kong sold for £28,750 at Christie's, South Kensington, yesterday (John Shaw writes). The poster, showing the gorilla on the Empire State Building with Fay Wray in one hand and a biplane in the

other, went to the Real Poster Gallery in London, after spirited bidding.

At the same sale, a sequence of American cinema door posters featuring Sean Connery in *Goldfinger*, *Thunderball* and *You Only Live Twice* fetched £33,300.

Therapy backfires for child molesters

By Ian Murray, Medical Correspondent

THERAPY has worsened the attitudes of many child molesters, who became more convinced that their victims had seduced them.

Home Office researchers studied the cases of 39 men who were encouraged to face up to their crimes and accept responsibility. Eight improved their attitude, 20 remained convinced that they were not to blame, and 11 blamed their victims even more than before.

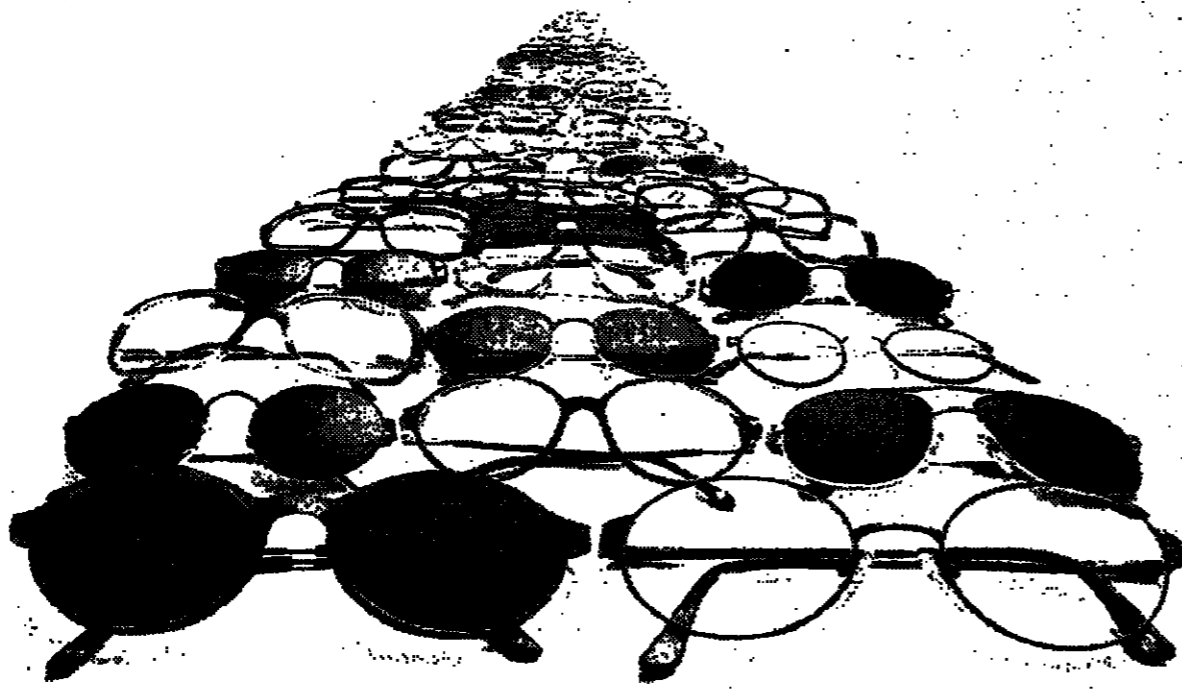
Writing in *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, Dawn Fisher, who led the research, says the therapy failed because the men were urged to confront their own responsibility too soon: "It is impossible at this stage to say whether it made them a bigger risk to children. But it is a worry, as there is such a high rate of recidivism among certain child molesters."

"Making offenders accept their blame is very important. But in the treatment in the community, they were being confronted too early. The effect was to make many of them very defensive. To avoid feeling guilty, they blame everything else they can think of."

This method of too-early confrontation has been going on for a long time. I don't know how many child molesters would have been affected like this, but it must be hundreds."

The Home Office has now urged therapists to take longer before reaching the stage where offenders have to accept their own guilt.

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Teletubbies attacked for being too cheerful

World broadcasters have rounded on the BBC's successful export for not showing children enough reality, reports Carol Midgley



Anne Wood, the creator, said: "Allow them joy"

THE Teletubbies were under attack from international broadcasters yesterday for being superficial, non-educational, too commercial and altogether too cheerful.

A world summit on children's television, held at Westminster, was told that stories about Tinky Winky, Laa-Laa, Dipsy and Po laughing in the sunshine failed to prepare youngsters for the evils of the real world.

As the programme, which has become one of the BBC's successful exports, was attacked by broadcasters from Europe, Australia, South Africa and America, its creator, Anne Wood, said: "I know people would like to make a wax image of me and stick pins in it, but I would just like to make a small place in the world for a child's right to enjoy themselves."

"It would be a great pity if we didn't allow them to be joyful. When you're very young, you live in an adult world you understand only partially. We try to present a

world from their perspective because, if they're smiling, they're confident and they're reassured and if they're reassured they will feel stronger in themselves."

However, Ada Hwang, head of pre-school programmes for Norway's public service channel NRK, told the Second World Summit on Television for Children: "Children are invited into an alien-looking world with alien-looking, baby-like characters talking in baby language. What is there for them to grow towards if the characters are a copy of themselves living in a world they will never encounter in their life?"

The programme was made with no British culture "tags" such as language or traffic signs, so that it could be sold easily abroad. "Teletubbies is the most market-orientated children's programme I have ever seen. So much is focused on the wrapping paper and so little on the concept. There is no story, no development, no

conclusion - only visually and a set of anachronistic rituals. I find the idea of the TV screens in the characters very hard to swallow. The films [shown on the characters' screens] are very poorly made."

All her counterparts in Denmark had refused to buy the programme, which is screened in the America, Portugal, South Africa, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Singapore, Denmark, Israel and Japan, where last year it won an educational prize. This week it was also bought by China and Spain.

Patricia Edgar, of the Australian Children's TV Foundation, said: "Teletubbies is not about learning and challenges. It is regressive for children who have gone beyond the babbling stage. The defence is always that the children like it, as though this exonerates them from any criticism."

Jill McCurdy, from Warner Brothers USA, said she believed the programme did not adequately prepare children for the evil in the real world, as did stories such as the Grimms' fairy tales. "The idea of a baby laughing in the sun projects a false image of the world," she said.

Delegates looked at some of the sensitive subjects which have been covered in international children's programmes, including incest, which was addressed by the Philippines company FCTV. Rene O Villanueva, creative director of the company, said: "In the Philippines, children are exposed to much more danger than television."

Teletubbies is produced by Ragdoll Productions for the BBC. According to BBC research, its repetitive nature helps very young children to learn, presenting a world from the experiences of other children.

Roy Thompson, of BBC Children's Commissioning, said that focus groups of parents, carers, researchers



The targets of tub-thumping: from left, Tinky Winky, Po, Laa-Laa and Dipsy

and professionals had found "extremely positive" results. "When the parents got together to talk about the programme, they noticed how effective it had been, and it

had not necessarily been until they spoke to other parents that they noticed a difference," he said.

Mr Thompson added that Teletubbies programmes

would continue to be made into the future. "The Teletubbies will be there for many years to come."

Television, page 51

DNA can point to race and sex of criminals

SAMPLES taken from a crime scene could soon be used to identify the race and sex of the criminal, West Midlands Police said yesterday.

The national DNA database, though never designed for this purpose, could give police a picture of the suspect right at the beginning of an investigation, said Detective Inspector Richard Leary, who has been working with the Forensic Science Service to develop the system.

They have found that the DNA profiles stored on the database correlate with the racial origins of the criminals who have provided them. It has been found that a particular pattern of DNA profile can be common to a racial group. The sex of an individual can also be identified, and in some cases it is possible to identify hair colour, too.

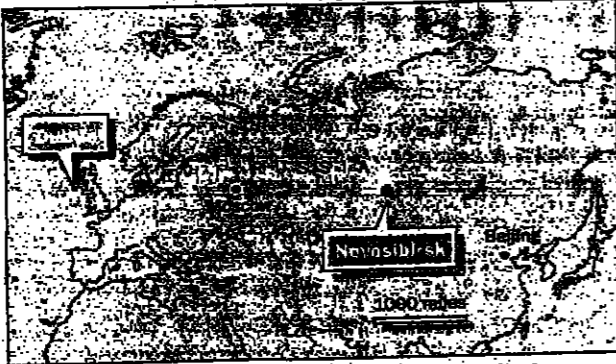
"Samples taken from the scene of a crime can be fed into the database and, by using computer software, we can predict part of the offender's genetic make-up" Mr Leary said.

A DNA profile of a suspect can be matched against profiles taken from convicted criminals and stored in the database. The profiles have no link with any particular gene.

However, the profiles differ significantly by race and gender. "We can identify the sex of a suspect with 99 per cent accuracy," said Mr Leary. "With ethnicity, the success rate depends on the racial group concerned." To test the reliability, he has sent samples from 200 people to a colleague at the Forensic Science Service in Birmingham, asking him to try to identify the race and sex of each one.

Salmon raised by one of Scotland's largest producers, Landcatch, will have their pedigrees recorded in a DNA database. The information is being used to improve the production of salmon by selecting those families which grow fastest, or are least susceptible to disease.

Heard the one about the Irish pub they flew to Siberia?



BY AUBREY MAGEE IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

A CERTAIN brand of lager is said to refresh the parts others cannot reach. After its latest venture, the same could be said of Guinness.

Seventy thousand pairs of the stuff, together with a couple of Irish pubs, have been flown from Dublin to deep-sea Siberia so that the locals can celebrate St Patrick's Day next week in the appropriate manner.

The Shamrock - what else? - is modelled on the Victorian pubs that

abound in the Irish capital. It was built by the Guinness-approved Irish Pub Company in Dublin, then dismantled and put on a Russian freighter. The walls, floors and roof are currently being reassembled in Novosibirsk, the Siberian capital with a population of two million potential stout drinkers.

A spokeswoman for Guinness made it clear that the Russians did not have to resemble the pub themselves, in the manner of a furniture store flatpack. "People from the pub company go over and

make it up on site, so you don't have the frustration of finding screws missing at the end," she said.

Since 1992, Guinness has built about 1,600 Irish pubs in 45 countries, including China, although most are in Britain and the Continent. Five styles are offered to interested customers: Dublin Victorian, Irish pub and shop, Irish country cottage, Gaelic pub or Irish brewery. The beer is supplied by Guinness, which will also provide music, recipes and advice on interior design.

Novosibirsk, on the River Ob, was

founded in 1893 as a stop on the Trans-Siberian railway. The Shamrock has been bought by, and will be run by, a Russian company, Septimus Trading. It is situated a mile from a church that marks the geographic centre of Russia.

The spokeswoman for Guinness said: "It really is unique to have a real Irish pub in somewhere as remote as Siberia. The locals won't know what hit them. But one thing is for sure, they will have the time of their lives in this pub on St Patrick's Day next Tuesday."



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Parties urged to discipline MPs behaving badly

Polly Newton on a Commons committee's complaints of bad manners and excessive noise during debates

THE poor behaviour of MPs in the chamber was highlighted yesterday by a Commons committee that is urging the party whips to bring the offenders into line.

In a report the Modernisation Committee says that there is too much rudeness and "unnecessary noise" on both sides. It insists that certain rules of conduct must be obeyed to protect the good name of the House, and says that MPs who flout those rules should be "seriously" admonished by the Speaker.

However, it says that the blame rests more often with large numbers of MPs who talk loudly during other people's contributions to a debate or disrupt proceedings by leaving the chamber at the start of business that does not interest them.

"In these cases it cannot be left to the Speaker alone to uphold acceptable standards of behaviour; the responsibility must be assumed by the parliamentary parties, acting through their chairmen and through the whips. We call upon them to take concerted action without delay to improve standards in all parts of the House."

The committee, which is chaired by Ann Taylor, the Leader of the House, says that members entering or leaving the chamber should nod or bow at the Speaker. It points out that Erskine May, the parliamentary "bible", also stipulates that they must not pass between the Speaker and a member who is addressing the House. The report says: "Regrettably these rules are far too often ignored."

In response to recent calls from some new MPs for clapping to be permitted in the chamber, the committee says that there is a danger that such a move would be open to abuse. "[I]t could lead in certain circumstances to orchestration of what would amount to standing ovations with the success or failure of a speech being judged not by its content but by the relative length of the ovation at the end..."

"At the same time, we condemn the growing misuse of the traditional cry of 'hear, hear' and in particular the recent practice of unnecessary noise of this kind from both sides which has routinely accompanied the entrance of the Prime Minister and Leader of

the Opposition before Prime Minister's Questions.

"Such noise serves no useful purpose and is grossly unfair to the Member who is currently trying to ask a question and the Minister who is replying."

Committee members say that any MP who is suspended from the House for misconduct should lose his or her parliamentary salary for the period of exclusion. They hope that such a punishment would deter Members from engineering their suspensions to gain publicity for a particular cause.

The committee recommends abolition of the rule which requires MPs to be "seated and covered" — that is, to wear a hat — if they wish to make a point of order during a vote in the chamber. In practice, the report says, the rule has meant that an opera hat is passed from one end of the chamber to the member concerned.

"This inevitably takes some time, during which the member frequently seeks to use some other form of covering such as an order paper. This particular practice has almost certainly brought the House into greater ridicule than almost any other, particularly



Rik Mayall as the unruly Alan B'Stard: real MPs are being told to improve their act

since the advent of television."

As reported in *The Times* in November, the committee is also in favour of rescinding the traditional precedence in Commons debates enjoyed by Privy Counsellors. All former Cabinet ministers are Privy Counsellors so the change

would mean that those now sitting on the back benches, such as Michael Heseltine and Kenneth Clarke, would have to wait their turn alongside relative newcomers unless the Speaker believed that they had particular expertise in the subject under discussion.

There is also a suggestion in the report that contributions to debates should more often be time-limited, although never to less than eight minutes per MP.

The committee's report will be implemented only if it is accepted by the House.

Watchdog reviews its working methods

By Andrew Pierce
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Commons committee that investigated the cash-for-questions affair has launched a public review of the way it handles serious complaints against MPs.

The action was prompted by the Standards and Privileges Committee's failure to agree a unanimous report on whether the former Tory minister Neil Hamilton took cash-filled envelopes from Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods.

One option being considered by the committee is to employ lawyers to act as professional assessors alongside Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner. Another is to give MPs on the committee the chance to cross-examine witnesses such as Mr Al Fayed who make serious allegations against MPs.

Under the present rules the witness interviews are conducted by Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner. The committee reaches its verdict on the basis of his report.

Robert Sheldon, the committee chairman, said: "I do not favour an adversarial system — it would lead to us becoming a court. But I want to consult a wide range of opinion as possible."

Mr Sheldon has opened the review, the first since the self-regulatory system was established, to wider public comment. "Anyone can contribute their view," he said.

Liddell in line to replace Dewar

By Gillian Harris

HELEN LIDDELL, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, has decided against standing for the Scottish parliament.

Her decision, announced yesterday, means that she is now first in line to become Scotland's first woman Secretary of State when Donald Dewar stands down in May.

Mrs Liddell, 46, is thought to have been persuaded to stay at Westminster by Tony Blair, who is keen to have her in his Cabinet during the first sitting of the Scottish parliament. Mr Dewar announced at the weekend that he would leave his job in May to concentrate on the Scottish election campaign. Mr Blair is expected to hold a Cabinet reshuffle in the same month.

Although Mrs Liddell, who succeeded the late John Smith as MP for Monklands East in 1994, has remained quiet about her ambition to be Scottish Secretary, those close to her say it is a job that she would relish. In 1990 she wrote a book about it — a 331-page political blockbuster, *Elite*, in which the central character, Anna Clarke, rises through the Labour ranks.

IN PARLIAMENT

TODAY in the Commons: Foreign Office questions; debate initiated by Tories on "Labour's hidden losses"; debate opened by Tories on "The Government's strategy to pensioners' incomes"; Fossil Fuel Levy Bill, remaining stages; short debate on government policy towards Sudan. In the Lords: Teaching and Higher Education Bill, third reading.

Let Scottish devolution mean diversity, not uniformity

SCOTLAND never accepted Thatcherism, and it is distinctly ambivalent about Blairism, to judge by the weekend's Scottish Labour conference in Perth. Both Thatcherism and Blairism are seen as distinctly English phenomena, alien to the more collectivist political tradition north of the border. Despite winning a key vote on union fees, the leadership was beaten on motions over cuts to lone-parent benefits (in a bitter motion saying the action was "economically inept, morally repugnant, and spiritually bereft"), Trident and the like.

These defeats can be dismissed as part of the usual conference ritual — meaningless gesture politics which do not really reflect the views of ordinary Labour members. And as Donald Dewar pointed out, a clear majority of constituency parties backed the leadership on lone-parent benefits. The defeat was because of union votes. The Blairites remain firmly in control of the party in Scotland, and have succeeded in altering the way that decisions are taken. Policy forums will take over the role traditionally performed by the annual conference, in line with

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

changes already adopted by the national Labour Party.

The leadership is also keeping a tight grip on the selection of candidates for next year's elections to the Scottish parliament. The decisions of Mr Dewar and Henry McLeish, his deputy, to leave Westminster for Edinburgh reflect the leadership's desire for a smooth transition and no early disputes between the new parlia-

ment and the Government in London. Mr Dewar and his colleagues seem sensitive about their position. They spent much of the weekend attacking their allies of convenience in last September's referendum campaign, the Scottish Nationalists, though Robin Cook sounded a more co-operative and pluralist tone.

The rumblings over the weekend emphasise the deep differences in political culture between Scotland and England. Tony Blair sees devolution in limited terms, a grant by London of very tightly defined powers of discretion,

Blairism with a tartan fringe. His advocacy of the "third way" and his rhetoric about changing the role of government are seen as English solutions to an English problem. Labour in Scotland never suffered the defeats that it did in England, so it does not need to reinvented as "new". The late John Smith never really understood, or forgave, England for not voting like Scotland. Gordon Brown is one of the few politicians who can advocate the "new" Labour message in the language of the Scottish Labour tradition in which he grew up and thrived during the 1970s.

The Government's devolution plans contain an inner ambiguity. In the eyes of some of the Blair inner circle, a different approach cannot be adopted in Edinburgh, risking stories about a clash with London. But if all the Government's talk of decentralising power away from London is to mean anything, it must imply diversity rather than a uniform approach throughout the country. Such diversity is a characteristic, indeed a virtue, of the type of federal system which Britain is becoming.

There is no reason why Scotland should not adopt different policies,

and attitudes to the role of government. From the rest of Britain if its new legislature wants to do so. Members of the Edinburgh parliament would have to take account of the implications of such social and economic policies, and consequent higher levels of taxation, for the willingness of businesses to invest and expand in Scotland. But that is their affair. They should have to face up to the costs, as well as the benefits, of devolution. If Scotland is not as "new" Labour as the rest of Britain, so be it.

PETER RIDDELL

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THE TIMES TUESDAY MARCH 10 1998

German rivals' wives sharpen their fingernails

GERMANY'S political leading ladies are preparing for the first time in the country's postwar history to enter the election fray and flash their newly sharpened, immaculately manicured nails on behalf of their husbands, Helmut Kohl and Gerhard Schröder.

In the conservative corner there is Hannelore Kohl, 65 last Saturday. Once dismissed as the Barbie of the Rhineland — because of her glue-like hairspray, high-collared blouses and withdrawn manner — she has started to give surprisingly combative interviews, revealing herself to be every bit as tough as Helmut. She is not counting on his defeat: "Once you've got Kohl, you've got him for a long time," she says.

The last opportunity for the Christian Democrats to replace Herr Kohl before general elections would be in May — after the European summit in which the membership of European monetary union is supposed to be agreed, and before the Christian Democratic Union's party conference in mid-May. Herr Kohl is unlikely to go voluntarily, and the party probably cannot steel itself to push him out, although opin-



Behind each leading man is a woman determined to claw her way to victory in the election, writes Roger Boyes from Bonn

ion polls point to a disastrous result in September's elections. A Cabinet colleague, addressing foreign correspondents last week, admitted: "In an Americanised election campaign, Kohl would not be our top candidate."

It is precisely Herr Schröder's talent to Americanise the German elections. He

is a social contender for the Chancellor — with a party in Hanover. Doris used the occasion to make clear that she will be a key part of her husband's election team. She has started by putting him on a diet and is dressing him in Armani and Hugo Boss; her aim is plainly to make the challenger look younger than his 54 years and this emphasises that the election is about generational change. Her influence, though, is starting to go well beyond image-moulding. Frau Schröder is helping to build bridges with

◀ Doris Schröder has put her husband on a diet and is dressing him in Armani ▶

Bavaria, her former home, where Catholic voters have to be persuaded that a divorced man can still lead Germany. The Hanover party included Social Democrat politicians and journalists from Bavaria. The generation gap is more visible between the contenders' wives. To be elected, Herr Schröder has to mirror some aspects of Herr Kohl to reassure voters in the centre. The



Hannelore Kohl, 65, has softened her buttoned-up image; Doris Schröder, 33, highlights the generation gap

two wives are not constrained in the same way. Frau Kohl, an interpreter in French and English, is the daughter of a designer of anti-tank rocket launchers. She was 12 when the war ended, and had to

struggle to survive in the rubble of a village outside Leipzig. Hannelore Kohl thus shares her husband's European vision, shaped by the misery of war. Herr Kohl won her over

with 2,000 love letters and they have been married 38 years. For years, her public appearances were limited to charity work. Now these trips are interspersed with more politically sensitive meetings,

in which she always sends "best greetings" from her husband. After a visit to a museum in Berlin the other day, she stopped at a building site near the future Chancellery. At the information stand a recording

of her husband flickered on to the screen. "Big Daddy is watching us," she told her companion in English.

Frau Schröder intends to be more intimately involved in the planning of his campaign. There are dangers. When Hiltu Schröder started to assert her personal politics too strongly, her husband lost ground in the opinion polls. The Germans, it seemed, did not want a Bill and Hillary Clinton double act.

Herr Schröder managed to turn a messy divorce into electoral advantage. Hiltu, he let it be known, refused to serve him sausage at home and so he had to stop on the way to the office. When he drank too much — he says he can down 15 beers without becoming seriously intoxicated — he was forced to sleep on the sofa.

The heart of every old-fashioned German male went out to him. The new Frau Schröder thus has to tread carefully in her campaigning. Quite apart from her politics — she is a pragmatic centrist like her husband — she is determined that he will not lose the carnivore vote.

The menu for her belated wedding party last weekend tells it all: the main dish was duck.

Britain snubbed as Austria plans early euro talks

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

BRITAIN will be given its first taste of exclusion from the future "Euro-X" council, the club of European Union single currency states, as early as mid-May under plans floated yesterday by France and Austria.

Although the euro is not due to be launched until next January, EU governments want to start meeting to coordinate policies soon after the May 2 summit that will choose the states sharing the future currency. The timing is delicate for the Government because it chairs EU business as the holder of the six-month presidency until July 1.

Viktor Klima, the Austrian Chancellor, whose Government succeeds Britain, has offered to run the first session of the new council, a body whose existence was fiercely opposed by Tony Blair at the Luxembourg summit last December. Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the French Finance Minister, called yesterday for the first meeting on May 19, before a regular finance ministers' session. He said that the council was not anti-British. But his remarks made clear that France wanted to move quickly to invest the body with real power.

The May summit, to be

chaired by the Prime Minister, is expected to choose 11 states for the first wave of the euro. Britain, Sweden and Denmark are opting out and Greece has failed to pass the entrance tests.

Chairing yesterday's "Eco-fin" council, Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, recalled that the EU leaders had promised Mr Blair that non-euro states could amend the euro club whenever matters of EU-wide interest were to be discussed. Britain played down the significance of an early launch.

Britain received complaints yesterday from German and Dutch Finance Ministers who were unhappy at a decision to allow transport ministers to debate the 1991 decision to abolish duty-free sales for travellers inside the EU next year. John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, has accepted Irish calls for a discussion, despite the opposition of Britain and most other member states to any reversal of the 1991 decision.

Mr Brown, as well as the French and German Finance Ministers, said yesterday that there would be no retreat on the scheme, which is being resisted fiercely by duty-free companies, ferry firms and airlines.

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Watchdog reviews its working methods

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Albanians defy Serb order for quick funerals

SERBIAN security forces yesterday threatened to throw the bodies of 51 ethnic Albanians who died in the two-day assault on the village of Prekaz into a pit communal grave unless their funerals were quickly arranged.

The grisly business of clearing the dead from the battlefield confirmed the worst fears of the Red Cross and human rights groups: that women, children and the elderly bore the brunt of the repression of families with links to the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

The latest delivery of bodies takes the total death toll from an action that has now lasted ten days to 75 — 24 died in the first villages to be attacked, Likoshani and Qirez. Another group of villages is still ringed by the security forces and it is almost certain the final body count will be well over 100.

For the first time in three days, police allowed journalists and the Red Cross through to the town of Srbica at the heart of the Drenica region and the centre for the operation to eradicate the KLA.

Three police trucks arrived in the town in the early afternoon and deposited 51 bodies at a road maintenance warehouse. One of the Albanians who unloaded the trucks, Sejdi Ahmetaj, said many of the dead were badly burnt.

Tom Walker reports on the victims of repression



and many bodies were without limbs and jaws.

"It seemed that many of them died from cannons and shells. This is just like what happened in Bosnia." He said the bodies were laid out in a row and covered by sheets. Of the 51, 28 have been recognised — 22 of them from Prekaz's most numerous and powerful family, the Jasharis, long suspected by the Serbian authorities of having KLA links.

"They fought for three days," said Mr Ahmetaj. "These men were determined to defend their households, and not to see their women raped and have their own throats cut."

Six of the bodies were too badly burnt to be recognised while 13 of the dead were women, 12 children, 15 men and six elderly. Police did not allow journalists access to the warehouse during the afternoon — they said the journey was too dangerous — so the numbers could not be verified.

Balancing the Albanian side of the massacre story with information from the Ministry of the Interior is impossible because the police have no spokesman in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo. At the town hall, journalists were told that they would have to send faxes to Belgrade with any questions, and would then be considered by a committee.

"The record for an answer is seven days," said one of the town hall functionaries.

Nazif Goxhali, a doctor at Srbica's crumbling hospital, said the Democratic League of Kosovo was demanding an international postmortem examination on the bodies from Prekaz. "The police have told us they will throw them in a pit but we must have international witnesses to know how these people died," he said.

He also appealed for deliveries of food and medicines to the area which he claimed was still blockaded by the police.

Both Dr Goxhali and Mr Ahmetaj said they believed the former ammunition factory at Srbica, the headquarters of the black-uniformed anti-terrorist unit leading the offensives against the KLA, was also being used as a detention centre. They claimed that at least 50 women and children had been kept there, and that those released were too frightened to talk about their experiences.

They advised journalists against driving southwest of Srbica, where they said the roads to Laushe and Vojnik, the new targets of the clampdown, was cut by police snipers.

Most refugees from the area have been flooding into Pec, further to the west. All along the rain-shrouded valleys leading to Srbica, police could be spotted, discernible by the smoke rising from their fires in the scrub-covered hillsides. Yesterday, they wore green and yellow ponchos over their blue uniforms, and their black-uniformed colleagues were not to be seen.

Despite official statements from Belgrade that the Drenica action is almost over and that the KLA has been nearly eradicated, fear still stalks the whole region. Albanians are only just daring to venture out into the open again — many of the men are

still hiding in the woods covering the higher ground — and whole villages lie deserted.

Quite apart from damaging the KLA, the brutal reprisals have altered the social structure of the Prekaz and Likoshani areas, where the leading families in a still feudal society have been wiped out.

In Pristina, more than 100,000 Albanians marched through the streets yesterday in protest at the continued clampdown. The Serbian riot police were nowhere to be seen, a sign that President Milosevic of Yugoslavia is somehow hoping to mollify President Clinton's Balkan en-

voy, Robert Gelbard, when he arrives in Kosovo today.

Chris Wenner, a cameraman for ITN News in London, was pummeled by three Serbs after he filmed one of them waving a gun at the Albanian protesters and kissing it during the demonstration. He suffered a fractured cheekbone and was last night in a "stable" condition in hospital.

□ Zagreb: Bujar Bukoshi, the "Prime Minister" in exile of Kosovo, said that independence was his supporters' minimum demand. "Not autonomy — it would be impossible to organise that now," he told *Feral Tribune*, a newspaper in Croatia. (AFP)



Chris Wenner, who was filming the Pristina demonstration for ITN, being helped by Albanian journalists after he was beaten up by Serbs

Feminine touch fails to move grammar gurus

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

A GRAMMATICAL battle has broken out between the French Prime Minister and the Académie Française, the venerable guardian of the French language, over whether official titles should be "feminised".

The row follows a strongly worded letter to President Chirac from senior academicians, pointing out that women Cabinet ministers have taken to calling themselves "Madame La Ministre" in defiance of strict linguistic orthodoxy.

The word *ministre* is masculine, Maurice Drouin, the academy secretary, declared, and thus the correct form is, and always will be, "Madame Le Ministre". The academicians thundered: "Everyone, no matter what their position in society, owes respect to our language which is a fundamental part of our intellectual heritage and our cultural future."

Lionel Jospin, the Prime Minister, waded into this linguistic minefield in support of his women ministers by arguing that French titles should be given a feminine form wherever possible. In a note to the Cabinet, timed to coincide with International Women's Day on Sunday, M Jospin called on his Government "to feminise the names of professions, functions, ranks or titles when the use of a feminine form is in common usage". The Prime Minister, who has appointed eight women to his Cabinet, noted such examples as *directrice* (the female form of *directeur*) and *conseillère* rather than *conseiller* (advised).

The phrase "common usage" appeared calculated to enrage the conservative academy, and yesterday's counter-attack was swift: "Jospin is like a Pasha surrounded by his harem," declared the writer Jean Dutourd. He demanded: "Who will have a care for grammar these days if not the

Académie Française?" Over the last 3½ centuries the academy has repeatedly intervened to defend and define the rules of the language of Molière, and many see the tendency to give non-gender-specific or female forms to words as a "pernicious" American fashion.

"Ministerial power does not confer the right to alter French grammar, the academicians said. The French words for mayor, president and doctor are always masculine, irrespective of the gender of the person holding the office, and "arbitrary modifications could lead to ridiculous and repulsive abuses", they warned.

The academy's critics argue that the academicians, with an average age of 81, are out of touch with a constantly evolving language. In French-speaking regions outside France, the trend for feminising certain words is well under way. In Quebec, traditionally masculine words such as *auteur* (author), *professeur* (professor) and *écrivain* (writer) have developed female forms: *une auteure*, *une professeure* and *une écrivaine*. But the academy has conceded that while it cannot police the use of the French language worldwide, "it is not for France to give such deviant examples, particularly not members of the Government".

Defiant women Cabinet ministers say they have no intention of reverting to "Madame Le Ministre". Environment Minister Dominique Voynet said almost everyone now uses the feminised form.

But the Académie Française is adamant. To bolster its case, the purists pointed out that all three female members of the Académie Française, out of a total of 220, have agreed to call themselves *académiciennes* rather than *académiciens*.

Leading article, page 19

Ministerial power does not confer the right to alter French grammar



Bodies of ethnic Albanians, killed in the Serb attack on Kosovo rebels, piled up in Srbica

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Danes set for big poll swing to Right

FROM CHRISTOPHER FOLLETT IN COPENHAGEN

DENMARK votes tomorrow in what promises to be a cliffhanger general election, with opinion pollsters predicting a solid swing to the Right and a possible change of government.

A Gallup survey in the daily *Berlingske Tidende* showed the opposition centre-right block, led by the Liberals and Conservatives, seemingly poised to oust the centre-left coalition of Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, the Social Democrat Prime Minister, with a combined 51 per cent of the vote and 92 seats in the 179-member parliament.

The Social Democrats, their Radical Liberal coalition partners and left-wing groupings supporting the Government are predicted to win 47 per cent of the vote and 83 seats overall. The Right can also count on two or three of the four seats of the North Atlantic provinces of Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

The election, which comes six months before the end of the Government's term, takes place after a lacklustre three-week campaign focusing on domestic issues: maintaining and improving the womb-to-tomb welfare state; protecting the environment; further reducing unemployment, now at about 7 per cent compared with more than 12 per cent when Mr Rasmussen came to power; and maintaining the economic upturn.

Immigration and refugees have been the hottest topics, reflecting increasing xenophobia, with the small, far-right nationalist Danish People's Party campaigning on an anti-immigration platform and set to win 8 per cent of the vote, according to the polls. Of Denmark's 5.2 million population, 4.7 per cent are foreign citizens.

Uffe Ellermann-Jensen, the opposition leader, has pledged to scrap Denmark's opt-outs from the Maastricht treaty, including its exemption from participating in Europe's single currency, if he becomes Prime Minister.

£300m paid out in French arms scandal, says Dumas

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

ROLAND DUMAS, the Socialist former Foreign Minister, struggling to extricate himself from a corruption scandal, denied yesterday receiving commission from the sale of French arms to Taiwan in 1991, but claimed that about £300 million had been paid to others as part of the deal.

M Dumas — a close ally of François Mitterrand, the late President — who is now head of the country's highest court, will be questioned by magistrates next week and is likely to be formally investigated on fraud and corruption charges, according to news reports in France.

While proclaiming his innocence and refusing to resign, M Dumas said that the amount of cash involved in the shadowy deal was ten times higher than previously reported and claimed that he could reveal the names of those who took the money.

"I can only say that the commission, paid with the authorisation of the Finance Ministry and presidency, was far larger than we have heard," M Dumas told *Le Figaro* yesterday. "The commission was about \$500 million. The names of those who received it, which it is not my intention to reveal here, are mentioned in a document linked to this case."

M Dumas' oblique threat to expose other senior members of the former Mitterrand Government comes at a potentially



Dumas questioned

damaging moment for the Socialist Party before next Sunday's regional elections.

The decision to sell six Lafayette-class frigates to Taiwan, a reversal of the previous policy of mollifying China, was taken by President Mitterrand and the then Foreign Minister, M Dumas, said Edith Cresson was Prime Minister when the deal was announced in September 1991.

"I had to go along with the decision. I then had to do my best to arrange things on a diplomatic level with Beijing," M Dumas, 75, said.

M Dumas' home and offices were searched by investigators in January and Eva Joly, a magistrate, has summoned him for further questioning on March 18.

Authors must pay: A French court yesterday ordered two authors and their publisher to pay about £100,000 jointly in damages and £90,000 in fines for implicating François Léonard, a former Defence Minister, in the murder of Yann Pina, an anti-corruption crusader. (AP)

VOTE NO...
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- It does not give Party members a direct vote for any member of the governing body except the Leader, but a vote in Leadership elections is not guaranteed.
- None of the promises made by William Hague about increased member involvement is reflected in the constitution.
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- The Party Officers in direct control of Central Office will not be elected and will not be accountable to the new governing body.
- A small number of MPs will be able to block any change to certain parts of the constitution, including changes to the governing body.

IF YOU READ THE CONSTITUTION, YOU WILL WANT TO VOTE 'NO'

This advertisement has been placed by the Charter Movement, COPOV and others, for a democratic Conservative Party. Further information may be obtained from 21 Ingleisle Close, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1QU, or www.tory-democracy.org or the Cairn Hotel, Ripon Road, Harrogate, March 27th, 8.30pm (fringe meeting at Central Council — all party members welcome).

UN praises Iraqi co-operation as inspectors complete first checks



Annun: negotiated deal

By JAMES BONE
IN NEW YORK
AND MICHAEL EVANS,
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

UNITED NATIONS arms inspectors have successfully completed the first check of sensitive sites in Iraq since the recent crisis and yesterday praised Baghdad's "honest spirit of co-operation". Plans are being made to send diplomats and weapons inspectors from the UN Special Commission (Unscorm) into President Saddam Hussein's eight palaces in about two weeks, UN officials said yesterday.

An Unscorm team led by Scott Ritter, the former US Marine who has been denounced by Iraq as an American spy, yesterday completed visits to several sites linked to the country's intelligence services from which the team had been barred in January. A senior UN official said the co-operation shown by Iraq provided grounds for optimism that Baghdad would abide by the weapons inspection agreement it negotiated with Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General. The UN published yesterday detailed procedures for the inspections

of the eight presidential palaces. At least two diplomats, drawn from a pool of officials stationed in Baghdad and nearby countries, will accompany each inspection team. The diplomatic escorts will not have power to stop an inspection but will be able to make a public report on the inspectors' conduct. Although Britain and the United States are among the countries invited to supply diplomats, it is unlikely they will be used because neither country has diplomatic representation in Baghdad. A Foreign Office official in London said the arrival of British diplomats in Iraq

would alert Iraqi authorities to impending palace inspections. The UN has told Iraq that it plans to mount "baseline" inspections of all eight presidential sites, totalling 1,058 buildings, in about two weeks. Further inspections will be held as needed. Jayantha Dhanapala, the Sri Lankan commissioner responsible for assembling the groups of diplomats and weapons inspectors, is due to arrive in Baghdad this week to prepare for the inspections and will remain in the country until the first checks of presidential sites have been completed. Richard Butler, the

chief UN weapons inspector, also plans to travel to Iraq this month. The detailed programme for inspecting Saddam's palaces was sent to the Security Council for approval yesterday. Mr Annan also said that he would consider Moscow's proposal for a Russian to be a new deputy head of the special inspection programme for the palaces. Mr Butler has one deputy, Charles Duelfer, who is an American. British officials said that provided Russia was not trying to oust the present deputy head, Britain was happy for Russia to take a more

prominent role in Unscorm. In London, Foreign Office officials expressed satisfaction with the way Mr Annan had handled the details over the palace inspections. After Mr Annan returned from Baghdad there were concerns that the wording of the agreement signed with Iraq, in particular the reference to "special procedures" for inspecting the presidential sites, might create loopholes for the Iraqis. However, Mr Annan has made clear since returning to New York that he intended to resolve the procedural details solely with Mr Butler.

Clinton facing writ over denial of 30-year affair

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

AN ANGRY woman threatened to sue President Clinton yesterday on extraordinary grounds — that he denies having an affair with her. Dolly Kyle Browning, who claims Mr Clinton called her "My Pretty Girl" and that they were lovers off and on for three decades, said the denial was defamatory and damaging to sales of her novel, a thinly disguised account of the alleged affair. This incongruous twist to Mr Clinton's woman troubles stems from sharply conflicting accounts over what was said when they met at their high school's 30-year reunion in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1994. Everyone who was there remembers that the pair sat on a couple of stacking chairs in a corner of the ballroom, talking intensely for 45 minutes. In Mr Clinton's version, given during his leaked deposition in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case, Mrs Browning launched into a "jealous tirade" about how unhappy she was that they had never slept together, and threatened to write a book claiming they had. His testimony continued that during the conversation he emphasised to her that their relationship had not been sexual. She said she had loved him for years and that

she needed money as much as Jennifer Flowers, who had sold the story of her affair with Mr Clinton to a newspaper. Alarmed by her tone, Mr Clinton said he called over an aide as a witness. Back in Washington, he wrote two pages of longhand notes about the confrontation and checked them with the aide before storing them in a folder under his desk. Mrs Browning, a Dallas property lawyer, said yesterday: "He's lying and has committed perjury. What kind of bizarre behaviour would it be for a woman to go into a jealous tirade in front of 300 people because a man had not slept with her?" In her own deposition in the Jones case, Mrs Browning said a Secret Service agent became alarmed when she swore at the President in the ballroom, but Mr Clinton waved the agent away. At no time, she said, was an aide listening to the conversation. Mrs Browning has said that Mr Clinton asked her if she would like to come to Washington and start again as before. Mrs Browning declared: "I'm going to talk to a lawyer about this because I'm considering a lawsuit. If this guy is saying we've never had a relationship, that's certainly damaging sales of the book.

He's calling me a crazed liar." In the meantime, she said, she has given a new sworn statement to Mrs Jones's lawyers rebutting President Clinton's deposition. Her version of the reunion is the prologue to *Purposes of the Heart*, which she and her third husband have published privately and are selling at www.deardolly.com under the Internet. An author's note says the book is loosely based on a true story but that names have been changed to protect the guilty. This week Mr Clinton's personal secretary, Betsy Currie, is due to be recalled before the grand jury investigating whether he had an affair with Monica Lewinsky and pressured her to lie about it. In the six weeks since Mrs Currie last testified, contradictions have emerged about whether it was Mr Clinton or Mrs Currie who initiated the plan for Vernon Jordan, the President's advisor, to help Ms Lewinsky to find a job at a time when lawyers in the Jones case were trying to question her. Mr Clinton's deposition apparently implied that Mrs Currie acted on her own, although Mr Jordan has said that he kept the President informed about all the help he gave to Ms Lewinsky.



Dolly Kyle Browning said the President's denial was defamatory and damaging to sales of her novel, which is a thinly disguised account of their alleged affair

Extremists try to stop prize for Amos Oz

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

AMOS OZ, the Israeli novelist yesterday became the target for ultra-nationalists determined to prevent his receiving the Israel Prize for literature because of his past criticism of Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank. The row erupted as Binyamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, rejected the suggestion made in London by Tony Blair that the building of settlements should be halted in an attempt to rescue the peace process. Zvi Hendel, a settlers' leader and Knesset deputy for the influential National Religious Party — a key backer of Mr Netanyahu's ruling Likud coalition — said that Mr Oz, well known as a peace campaigner, should be denied the prize because of a 1989 newspaper column in which he called Jewish extremists a "Jewish Hezbollah", a reference to the Iranian-backed militants fighting Israeli troops in south Lebanon. "However gifted an author he is, one who singled out a respectable part of the public, true pioneers... and slanders them... is not fit to receive the Israel Prize," Mr Hendel told Israel radio. In the offending article, Mr Oz said that extremist Jewish settlers in the West Bank were a "deformed, obtuse and cruel cult that burst forth several years ago from a cloudy corner of Judaism and threatens to destroy all that is dear and holy to us". Mr Oz said yesterday that "the article, in

its time, was directed against the most radical of the settlers". The son of Polish immigrants whose widely admired works include *Black Box*, *A Perfect Peace*, *Don't Call It Night* and *Touch the Water*, *Touch the Wind*, Mr Oz is a complex character who, although he criticised vehemently Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, fought in the Six Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Yesterday, Moshe Shamir, a fellow novelist noted for his right-wing views, took issue with the campaign to blackball Mr Oz from the country's leading prize. "I disagree with those who want to take away the Israel Prize from Oz since he is receiving the prize for his popular, terrific literary creations and not for his articles," he said.



Oz attacked extremist settlers as "cruel cult"

Democrat 'hustler' vows to name donors

Washington: Johnny Chung, a Democratic fundraiser who was known around the White House as a "hustler", has agreed to plead guilty and name names in the inquiry into illegal contributions to President Clinton's re-election campaign (Ian Brodie writes). His plea bargain is the first

major break for investigators. A key question is whether he can throw any light on allegations that China tried to buy influence with the US Government by pumping overseas cash into the campaign. Mr Chung, 43, a Taiwanese-American entrepreneur, was appearing in court in Los

Angeles yesterday to admit channelling \$20,000 (£12,200) in illegal donations to the Clinton campaign. This was a fraction of his alleged deception. He visited the White House 49 times and donated \$366,000, including a cheque for \$50,000 that he handed directly to Hillary

Clinton's chief of staff. In return, he was immediately allowed to escort five Chinese businessmen to watch President Clinton deliver his weekly radio address and be photographed with him. All the money was later returned by the Democratic National Committee.

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Faction chief ends exile with vow to unite Afghanistan

FROM JAMES FERGUSSON IN MAZAR-I-SHARIF, AFGHANISTAN

NOT every Afghan leader wants war, it seems. In his first interview with a Western journalist for two years, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the ousted Prime Minister recently returned from exile in Iran, laid out a blueprint for peace. "A military solution is not the answer," he said. "I propose dialogue, a ceasefire, an interim government leading to proper elections. We need to find an Afghan solution." He was speaking to *The Times* in a heavily fortified compound on the outskirts of the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, the focus of resistance against Taleban, the Islamic purist movement which controls the southern two thirds of Afghanistan. The city has been on a knife-edge since September, when Taleban captured it for the second time in a year. For a second time they were repulsed, at the cost of thousands of lives. Truckloads of heavily armed men

cruise the muddy streets by day, and enforce a strict curfew at night. The tension is perhaps worse than usual, because the leaders of the so-called Northern Alliance, the motley collection of Mujahidin and former Communists ranged against Taleban, have been meeting in Mazar to

His goals are a ceasefire and an interim Kabul government

discuss the war. The city is about to become the alliance's official capital. Burhanuddin Rabbani, still the recognised President, is expected to announce a new coalition Cabinet this week, an alternative administration to the Taleban regime in Kandahar and Kabul. "I am here because of repeated invitations," Mr Hekmatyar said. "They wanted me to be a part of the

Rabbani Government, but coalition is not the solution - I seek no role in it. I have not joined the alliance."

Tall and stately, with a black beard and black turban to match, there is no question that Mr Hekmatyar has gravitas. It was the fierce fight for Kabul in 1995 between him and another legendary Mujahidin leader, Ahmed Shah Masood, the former Defence Minister, which led to the chaos that spawned Taleban. But there is a certain logic in his position. "Hezb-i-Islami [his party] is the only party that can unite Afghanistan - it is the only national party. We have support in both north and south," he said. "If Hezb-i-Islami were to show partially, there could never be peace." Cynics might point out that this is a way of saying that Hezb-i-Islami is hopelessly split. Many of Mr Hekmatyar's commanders had defected to Mr Masood's ethnic Tajik



Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is ruling out a military solution

Jamiat party. Nevertheless, the party's role in any future settlement is crucial.

His primary goals now, he says, are a ceasefire and the setting-up of an 18-month interim government in Kabul. Negotiations with the alliance for this are continuing. He wants

each to produce a list of "non-partisan" candidates from which the interim government might be drawn. When it was suggested to him that no one in Afghanistan was non-partisan, he replied: "I can think of a hundred" - then declined to name a single one.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Saudi monarch is taken to hospital

Riyadh: King Fahd of Saudi Arabia (below right) has been admitted to hospital suffering from an inflammation of the gall bladder. Such a condition could be caused by a simple infection, but it could also be linked to cancer of the pancreas, medical sources said. They said it could have serious repercussions for a patient in his mid-70s like the King. Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz said last night the King was "doing well" in a conversation with President Assad of Syria, who telephoned to inquire about the monarch's health, news agencies reported. The royal palace called for prayers for his early recovery. King Fahd was admitted to hospital in November 1995 after suffering a stroke and called on his half-brother, the Crown Prince, to run affairs of state for six weeks. The monarch recovered and returned to his duties, although Prince Abdullah, 74, has increasingly played a more prominent role. (AFP)



Pakistan train blast kills 10

Lahore: Ten people were killed and 40 others injured when a bomb ripped through a train travelling through Pakistan's eastern Punjab province. Rescue workers used saws and blowtorches to free trapped passengers. A second bomb exploded at a courthouse in Sukkur in southern Sindh, injuring eight, including five policemen. No group claimed responsibility for either bombing. (AP)

Waco gunman surrenders

A siege in Waco, Texas, scene of the storming of the Branch Davidian cult headquarters by the FBI in 1993, ended peacefully when an embittered Vietnam ex-serviceman surrendered after holding off police with a rifle for 14 hours inside a veterans' benefits office (James Bone writes). Jason Leigh, 48, also maintains a website accusing the Government of covering up purported UFO sightings.

Liz Taylor allowed home

Los Angeles: Elizabeth Taylor, left, was released from hospital, ten days after falling on her 66th birthday. She will be confined to bed in her Bel Air home for several days. Shirine Ann Coburn, a spokeswoman, said: "She's still in a little pain. She will be in bed for a little while." The Oscar-winning actress fell at her home on February 27 and suffered a fracture in her lower back. (AP)

30 perish in bus inferno

Lagos: A commuter bus exploded after colliding head-on with a car in Awe Gber village in the northern Nigerian state of Benue, killing 30 people, including several children, who were burned alive. Several passengers were carrying petrol. A fuel shortage has prompted many people to travel long distances for supplies. (AP)

HIV prisoner in suicide bid

Melbourne: An HIV-positive Australian, jailed for having unprotected sex, was on life support after hanging himself on his second day in prison. *The Age* said. The 52-year-old had admitted in court that he knew his condition made him "lethal" to sexual partners, but yet had unprotected sex with three men. He was jailed for eight years. (Reuters)

Unhappy with hookahs

Dubai: The smoking of shishas, or hookahs, is to be banned in Dubai cafes after midnight for moral and health reasons, the state-owned *Emirates News* reported. The hubble-bubbles are served in cafes throughout the United Arab Emirates. (Reuters)

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Hindu poise reins

Police beat students a Harare protest

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Hindu Right poised to take reins in India

LIGHT-WING Hindu nationalists are within striking distance of forming a coalition government in India, taking the world's second most populous country into uncharted political waters.

Their main rival, the Congress Party, desperate to revive the vote-catching Gandhi name, may finally have succeeded in persuading Sonia Gandhi to take over as leader, a role she unofficially occupies as principal behind-the-scenes manipulator of party events.

The widow of Rajiv Gandhi, the assassinated former Prime Minister, boosted her authority after a successful campaign performance in the general election, in which she undoubtedly saved the party from a rout. She may now abandon her pledge to stay out of day-to-day politics in order to secure control of the party for the eventual succession of one of her two children, the oldest of whom, Priyanka, is 25. Even if she refuses the top job, Mrs Gandhi will be the power behind the throne.

Sitaram Kesri, 83, the party president, resigned yesterday and Mrs Gandhi is likely to be asked formally today to take over. He was essentially kicked out by Mrs Gandhi, who refused to let him share any election platform with her

Sonia Gandhi urged to become Congress leader.

Christopher Thomas writes

and kept him uninformed about crucial party events.

Mr Kesri, whose disastrous bid for the prime ministership last year led to an unwanted and unnecessary election, avoided direct criticism of Mrs Gandhi but did not hide his bitterness at being humiliated by her. "No self-respecting person could tolerate the way things happened during the last two months," he said.

The pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), presenting a more moderate image after rising to prominence in the 1990s on a platform of religious extremism, has unanimously chosen Atal Behari Vajpayee, a respected former Foreign Minister, as its prime ministerial candidate.

Mr Vajpayee, seeking to assuage the fears of India's 120 million Muslims, said: "There should not be any apprehension about the BJP." The party

and its allies are still short of a parliamentary majority, but that may be the best India can expect of its next government after an election that gave nobody a mandate.

If the BJP forms an administration, it will be too weak to implement the demands of its more extreme wing. Its coalition partners are mostly fickle friends, tempted to join forces for short-term political gain, and there is little likelihood that such a government would last a five-year term.

It would not even command enough votes to implement some of its central election pledges, including scrapping Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave special status to Kashmir, the only Muslim-majority state, when it joined India in 1947. Nor would it be able to scrap Muslim personal law, which permits the taking of up to four wives.

Its pledge to conduct a nuclear test might also be impossible to honour because of the inevitable political and economic implications. It would jeopardise Western aid and trigger a reaction from Pakistan, which has, or is close to possessing, nuclear bombs — taking one of the world's most dangerous flashpoint closer to nuclear conflict.

The BJP's economic policies focus on the philosophy of *swadeshi* (self-reliance), and the party has already devised a slogan urging Indians to be patriotic by buying Indian goods. Its promise to "reform the reforms" — to look again at economic liberalisation introduced seven years ago — could lead to an end in foreign investment outside the key sectors of power, roads and water.

Mr Vajpayee hopes that President Narayanan will this week call on him to form a government. To survive the combined votes of the Congress and the United Front, a coalition of centre and left-wing parties, the BJP and its allies will have to persuade one or two small regional parties to abstain.



Sonia Gandhi: to be asked today to lead Congress



Students demonstrate yesterday at the University of Indonesia in Jakarta against the planned seventh five-year term of President Suharto

Suharto wins extra emergency powers

FROM DAVID WATTS IN JAKARTA

PRESIDENT SUHARTO of Indonesia was granted special powers yesterday to maintain national unity and deal with any emergency.

He seemed to be digging in for a long struggle against not only the International Monetary Fund but also world opinion, while his people look on bewildered. But his special powers will be of little help in lending off foreign attention and are clearly aimed at the home audience.

There is little that the Americans can do to influence this determined former soldier once he has decided that he is fighting for national dignity. Perhaps it was no coincidence that not far from the rubber-stamp People's Consultative Assembly where he was granted these powers — no questions asked — protesting students threw down a gauntlet to the Government demanding complete political reform. Ominously, no details of the new powers were revealed but they are thought to include the power to dissolve the assembly and deploy the army.

It is a measure of the powers and the effectiveness of the parliament under the New Order Government that no one thought to ask the President what were his requirements and why he needed any further authority to act.

The students know their country's history well enough to recall that it has always been their duty to bring about change through protest and this time seems likely to be no different.

After a meeting with representatives of the military faction in parliament last week, the leaders of 1,500 demonstrating students at the University of Indonesia told a press conference that they had come away disappointed.

"We reject their calls for gradual reform," said a student leader who called himself simply Ahmed, one of seven

members of the University Senate who met the press. "Our message is that we must have total political reform."

"We not only reject Suharto's acceptance speech for the presidency. We reject his candidacy for President for the next five years. We acknowledge that there has to be action against corruptors but this will not succeed unless there is first complete political reform."

On another day of uncertainty for the currency, the rupiah, the main state banks intervened heavily to try to stave off a calamitous collapse in its value. The rupiah hit a low of 12,300 to the American dollar but closed at 10,600.

Ironically the banks were joined in their endeavour by currency brokers who fear that if there is too rapid a decline in the value of the currency, it will give the President an excuse to introduce a currency board to manage the exchange rate.



Suharto awaits a foreign delegation wanting him to implement IMF-imposed economic reforms

Police beat students at Harare protest

FROM JAN RAATH IN HARARE

HEAVILY armed Zimbabwean riot police yesterday beat-charged about 300 university and technical college students demonstrating in Harare for higher government maintenance grants.

No confirmation could be obtained from the police, but witnesses said that several students were injured as they fled from police officers surrounding Education Ministry offices. Police sealed off the University of Zimbabwe's Harare campus and technical colleges in the capital after warnings of a student demonstration as a boycott by tertiary institutions all over the country went into its second week.

Police also broke up a demonstration in the western city of Bulawayo. Reports that shots had been fired into the air by the police could not be confirmed. Peaceful demonstrations were held in Gweru and Mutema.

Learmore Jongwe, the president of the Zimbabwe National Students' Union, said the value of grants had dropped because of the country's economic crisis and students were "going to starve".

Rugby chiefs challenge Mandela inquiry plans

FROM SAM KILEY IN JOHANNESBURG

THE white-dominated rugby establishment in South Africa is challenging Nelson Mandela's presidential powers in a High Court battle to prevent him from launching a commission of inquiry into racism and maladministration in the sport.

Once seen as the best way to unite South Africa's ethnic groups, sport has become the issue most likely to end Mr Mandela's cherished dreams of reconciliation. Amid a spate of alleged racist incidents on the cricket pitch and allegations of an anti-black bias in other sports, senior sports administrators have joined calls for racial quotas to be imposed on teams.

President Mandela will appear in person within the next couple of weeks before Mr Justice William De Villiers, himself a controversial figure who opposed the admission of black lawyers to the Pretoria bar in 1983.

Mr Mandela, 79, will be asked to justify his decision to appoint a commission of inquiry into rugby after the South African Rugby Football Union, a private organisation, was accused by several members of financial irregularities, nepotism, mismanagement, a lack of commitment to

rugby in poor (mainly black and mixed-race) areas and racism.

The President decided against giving evidence yesterday as originally scheduled, his spokesman said, adding: "The President will need another week or two to prepare himself for the hearing."

President Mandela's courtroom adversary will be Louis Luyt, president of the rugby union and a pillar of the apartheid-era establishment, who was implicated in the notorious 1976 "information scandal" in which the former South African Government



Mandela: preparing for court appearance

was exposed trying to buy a good press internationally.

The presidential commission was set up after the rugby union allegedly refused last year to co-operate with a Sports Ministry inquiry into racism and poor administration. Mr Luyt, a burly former Orange Free State rugby captain and close friend of former Presidents Vorster and Botha, has argued that the establishment of a commission to investigate the activities of a private body was a violation of his rights.

Whatever the legal arguments may be, there is no doubt that administrators of traditionally white-dominated sports have been severely criticised for their alleged failure to field non-whites at international level. Nobody of black or Coloured origin is playing regularly in the national cricket or rugby sides.

Further, the normally genteel atmosphere surrounding South African cricket matches has been badly soured after Fanie de Villiers, Pat Symcox, his fellow Test bowler, and Paddy Upton, the coach, were ordered to appear before a disciplinary hearing into racist comments they were said to have made to spectators during a Test against Pakistan last week.

'Condom Virgin' art exhibit attacked

FROM CATHIE BELL IN WELLINGTON

THE National Museum of New Zealand has had to employ security guards to watch over an exhibition of young British artists' work after an attack on one piece considered blasphemous by Christians.

A 3in-high statue of the Virgin Mary encased in a condom was kicked to the ground by a man at the weekend. The ground by a man at the weekend. The ground by a man at the weekend. The ground by a man at the weekend.

Museum staff restrained the man, 32, who was arrested on charges of wilful damage. Another artwork, Sam Taylor-Wood's version of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*, with Jesus as a topless woman, has also outraged local Roman Catholics. Both artworks are part of a *Pictura Britannica* exhibition.

About 60 Catholics waving placards,

praying and singing, protested in the foyer of the Wellington museum at the weekend. Cardinal Thomas Williams, Archbishop of Wellington, complained to the museum yesterday.

The Rev Graham Capill, leader of the Christian Heritage political party, said that the museum would have been more sensitive to complaints if Maori groups had been complaining. The museum operated with double standards, he said, adding that its attitude was disappointing in the extreme.

"If Maoris had been offended by an exhibit, within hours the staff would have addressed the problem. When Christians are offended by an exhibit which attacks a central figure of their faith, security is increased and vows of seeing the exhibition out are affirmed," Paul Brewer, for

the museum, said that the museum was not being insensitive by continuing to exhibit the works.

Cheryl Sotherton, the museum's chief executive, said that Ms Kovats's piece reflected her desire to place a figure for which she had deep respect, the Madonna, in the context of her own life as a young woman in contemporary Britain and "into a context of her concerns about issues of sexuality, contraception, safe sex messages in the community, and abortion, which she feels the Catholic Church should be considering".

Mr Brewer said that people visiting the museum were mostly indifferent to the protests. More than 250,000 people have visited the museum since it opened on February 14. *Pictura Britannica* has been showing since March 1.

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The day I conquered my fear of flying

Julia Gorst reveals how a one-day course for nervous passengers helped her to overcome her 'aerophobia'

The day dawned wet and miserable, an accurate reflection of my state of mind. My task was to conquer my fear of flying, which had prevented me from going on a plane for four years. The solution, I hoped, was to attend a course for first-time or nervous passengers at Heathrow airport.

I took food because previous experience of flying told me that the chance of liking anything laid on was minimal. I took a magazine because I knew that in the circumstances I was about to encounter nerves would prevent me from reading any more than the first sentence of one article time after time. And, for moral support, I took my sister.

My family had been warned by those running the course that the days before it would be stressful and full of panic. Apparently I had been associating 'doom, despair and failure' with the day ahead. On the contrary, understanding that the course would culminate in a flight, I took perverse pleasure in knowing that I would be the one person who would refuse to board the aircraft. There would be double satisfaction in this as British Airways boasts a 100 per cent success rate for this course.

On arrival we were welcomed with smiles of reassurance and congratulations for confronting our fears in coming this far. The morning was spent in a conference hall uncomfortably close to the runway. Precisely why we were in this room went unsaid but I expect it was a not-so-subtle attempt to prove how many planes take off and land successfully each day. I wasn't fooled, however: I was well aware that it would be the one plane I had avoided for the past four years that would crash.

As the pilots lectured on all aspects of flying, from mechanics and statistics to safety, they were

informative and almost persuasive but many of us were still unconvinced. In a question-and-answer session even more possible disaster scenarios were raised: "What if a firework goes off near the plane?", or "What if all the engines fail, the pilot gets food poisoning and no one on board can fly a plane?" The response, quickly made, was that "what if" questions were forbidden.

At lunch we were encouraged to socialise and to discuss our fears with fellow aerophobics. My sister briefly left me alone to get a sandwich and I concentrated on my magazine (yes, that first sentence) and my food. Either way I didn't have to speak to a stranger — my second phobia, for which I hope there is a "fear of socialising" course.

When my sister returned, I left her — the older, friendly, more confident, non-aerophobic one — to the same fate. When I reappeared she was chatting to a young, sweet-looking but dull man who spoke of his claustrophobic tendencies. Whether we had asked to know or cared was of no importance to him: so we smiled sympathetically — avoiding any eye contact in case he got the wrong message — until he bored even himself.

After lunch we were introduced to the cabin crew, who would have the daunting task of coping with potentially hysterical passengers. Then came a session with a psychiatrist, who taught us breathing and relaxation exercises. He made us close our eyes to experience the flight in our imagination, claiming this would trick the brain into believing we were on a plane. Maybe it worked for some, but not for me. Anyway, the closing of eyes was our ticket to further relaxation, and we were soon asleep, lulled by the monotonous pattern of the psychiatrist's voice guiding us on a flight. After waking up, we were

driven in coaches to the airport, where several people experienced minor panic attacks.

The rest of us chatted nervously and, seemingly without worry, boarded the British Airways shuttle. I noted, suspiciously, the huge smiles of the pilots and air stewards as we boarded and could not help wondering just why they were grinning — they knew we could not turn back.

As the plane moved towards the runway, my mind was thrown back into reality. The trance that had led me from the hotel to the aircraft subsided, and I realised they had won: I was on a moving plane, albeit one that was travelling at only 5mph. I was, and remain, unsure as to when I was offered the choice of not going on the flight, or when it was pointed out that I was stepping on to the object of my least desire.

After a short delay the shuttle roared down the runway and glided effortlessly into the sky. The flight, a round trip over the South of England, was commented on by the co-pilot, who explained every noise and bump reassuringly. Surprisingly, I wasn't at all frightened, but actually enjoyed the flight and the magnificent evening views of the lights of London and Dover. There were a few tense moments during turbulence, but this had been explained so thoroughly during the day that I knew there was nothing to fear.

A few passengers had slight panic attacks from claustrophobia but otherwise everyone was calm and relaxed. We had a smooth landing, and there was a spontaneous round of applause from the passengers.

On disembarking we all received certificates and the same big smiles as when we boarded. Realising now that these smiles were genuine, from people glad to have helped us, I was able to respond with the same warmth. My fear had been conquered and I would fly again.

I took pleasure in knowing I would refuse to board



Possible disaster scenarios such as "what happens if all the engines fail and the pilot gets food poisoning" were dismissed



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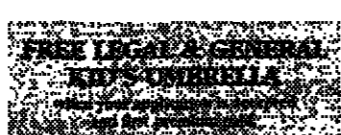
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Help for tobacco addicts

TWENTY-FIVE years ago the tobacco industry spent hundreds of thousands of pounds building a factory to make new smoking material (NSM), a substance impregnated with nicotine that looked and felt vaguely like tobacco but had never been near a plantation and in fact was manufactured in urban Scotland. If smoked regularly from adolescence, NSM lengthened the time it took for a smoker to develop cancer of the lung, so that many — possibly even most — heavy smokers would have been dead before their tumours developed.

The companies were so certain that their product would be welcomed that they made little effort to alert either politicians or doctors to the fact that this was the advance they had been looking for. As it happened, both groups rejected it out of hand on the ground that it was not entirely safe, and declared that the only honest objective was to persuade patients to give up smoking entirely. This seemed an odd decision, for while it was understandable that some smokers spurned NSM, which had little in common with quality tobacco from the American South or southern Africa, it was incomprehensible that lives should have been sacrificed in the search for perfection.

If doctors fail to persuade patients to give up smoking entirely, there is then a danger that they may give up on the patient — compromise is not in their vocabulary.

The European Respiratory Journal recently reported on research from the University of Vienna, and the department of pulmonary medicine in Helsingborg, Sweden, which shows the advantages to patients of reducing the number of cigarettes they smoke, even if they cannot give up completely. The Austrian figures suggest that a 50 per cent reduction in smoking throughout the European Union could save 100,000 lives a year, and a 1 per cent reduction would save 1,000 lives annually.

The problems caused by smoking are dose-dependent — the more people smoke, the more likely they are to suffer from cancer of the lung, bladder and oesophagus.

Smoking is also associated less directly with cancer of the cervix, stomach, liver, anus, vulva and penis, and directly related to circulatory and respiratory diseases such as coronary and peripheral vascular disease, chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

Most smokers have tried to stop on at least one occasion, and 40 per cent have tried three or four times. But the habit has a physiological and psychological grip on people: they are addicted to the nicotine and dependent on the feel of a cigarette in their hand.

Since only 5 per cent of heavily dependent smokers will be able to give up if they rely on willpower alone, they will need nicotine in some form or other in order to overcome their physiological addiction. Various companies make skin patches that deliv-

er nicotine at a relatively steady rate through the skin. The best-known of these transdermal patches are Nicorette, made by Pharmacia & Upjohn, Nicomil (Elan) and Nicotinell (Novartis Consumer).

No smoker's medicine chest should have only patches,

straightforward though they are to use as they employ a simple dosage regime and can be easily worn under clothing.

Nicotine inhalers should also be kept in the bathroom cabinet. Such gum, which allows rapid absorption of nicotine into the bloodstream through the lining of the mouth, has been in use for more than 20 years. It comes in different strengths but can be of help only if it is chewed correctly — not continuously like regular gum, but chomped until the maximum

taste is released; the gum should then be parked between the cheek and the teeth.

A former smoker with a really strong craving might also need a Nicorette nasal spray — a bottle with a pump device that sprays nicotine into the nose.

Finally, the most cunning device, and the one that all those who want to cut down or quit should have, is the Nicorette Inhalator. This is a tube that looks rather like a cigarette holder but contains a cartridge that is packed with nicotine. When the smoker inhales he or she gets a shot of nicotine, and at the same time the mere handling of the inhaler satisfies the psychological cravings developed through years of holding a cigarette.

With the help of one or more of these aids, some of the 69 per cent of Britain's 12 million smokers who want to give up should find that tomorrow, National No Smoking Day, may be less horrendous than they had expected.

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Robert Johnston chilling out: "Walking to a packed Tube in the pouring rain and catching a bus at the other end left my nerves so jangled that I had to down a stiff G&T when I got home"

On the town, on the cheap

Once I dreamt I had a life. In this dream, rather than endure an endless cycle of working, drinking and sleeping, I would greet each new day with a song in my heart. I would live in the Highlands, read *War and Peace*, take up sketching and treat every living creature I met on my long treks across the moors with the respect it deserves. Then I woke up wondering if Erada made wellies.

In the 1990s it seems that every man and his dog has upped sticks and moved to Skye to learn Gaelic, grow potatoes and get their kicks from the Internet. But what about me? If I took the road to the isles to breed scotties, it would be me who would end up barking. I would sooner open a patisserie in Putney than weave tweed in Portree.

What I want to do is urban downshift: get in touch with the real me while keeping the shops, the people and the entertainment. I am not alone; this is a growing trend as more and more city dwellers discover that the only way to have the life they aspire to is to stay in the city, but work less hard.

Recently I realised that my stress levels could propel the Astra satellite into orbit and it was time to chill out on the work front. But how could I work less and still afford to live in town? Whatever happened, I would have to pay my mortgage every month so I would have to look for savings in other areas.

So when my latest heart-stopping Visa bill revealed the true cost of hard work, downshifting seemed the obvious solution. It couldn't be too difficult, could it? Just a matter of going out less and saving up those money-off coupons on the sides of washing-powder packets. In fact, the prospect bathed me in a rosy glow of nostalgia. As anyone who has moved to a big city on leaving college will agree, you seemed to have a better time on less

The Nineties are the downshifting decade. But what if you yearn not for a better quality of life, simply a cheaper one in the city? Spendthrift Robert Johnston tries a spot of urban downsizing



money when you first arrived than you do now, despite earning three times as much. I had spent £326.06 — not counting cash — on going out in a month. So that was the obvious place to start. In my fresh-faced graduate days, going out for a drink meant a few pints in the local; lately, it is more likely to mean a couple of glasses of champagne or a cocktail. Having noticed that the pub around the corner was selling Heineken at £1.50 a pint, my first step to sanity was obvious. Rather than spend £14 on two glasses of champagne, I could spend £3 on a couple of pints, a saving of around £100 per month. At this rate not only could I

change my life. I could buy a BMW, too. All I had to do was to persuade friends to meet me in a dodgy pub in Clapham. The next obvious saving was taxis. While I was happy to do the crossword on public transport in the morning, at the end of a long day all I wanted to do was get home, so I caught cabs — cost per month: £200. As I already bought a travel card each week the saving should have been £200, but as the trauma of walking to a packed tube in the pouring rain and catching a bus at the other end left my nerves so jangled I had to down a stiff gin and tonic when I got home, so I am being honest and reducing that to £160. The other great expense

after a hard day's work is food. When I got home the last thing I wanted to do was cook, so it was meals out three times a week, takeaways and Marks & Spencer's best the rest of the time. That set me back £400 per month, so there had to be some fat to trim there. What I needed was a trip down memory lane to Soho's Berwick Street market, where I knew I would find bargains galore. In those heady, immediately-post-student days, my chronically broke flatmate, Sasha, would trawl Berwick Street to pick up produce that wasn't going to make it to the next day — from two dozen avocados to half a whole brie — for a song. The cheese might

have been running down the stairs, but after her guacamole, who cared? Deciding there was no mileage in persimmons, I plumped for a tray of peaches for a pound. Brilliant, I thought, but when I got home I realised the only thing I could think to do with them was make bellinis. So I bought a bottle of champagne, leaving me with a stinking headache, a pile of rotten fruit — and I was £12 down. Undefeated, I turned to the two great friends of the terminally short of cash — carrots and sweetcorn. Whatever you cook, these low-priced pals can bulk it out by at least a quarter. So for £5 I managed

to make an ersatz spaghetti bolognese that lasted me four days. Of course, man cannot live by pasta alone, so one day I treated myself to a takeaway cheese and tomato pizza for a fiver. Still, a potential monthly saving of £360, with scurvy thrown in for free.

Actually, I cheated. I rang up every friend who might conceivably owe me dinner and none too subtly called in the debt. I reckoned that if I wasn't too greedy, I could eat out once a week for the next month at least. And by the time the friends ran out, my digestion would be so shot to hell that I wouldn't be able to tell Michel Roux from macaroni cheese — and Michelin-starred cuisine would be wasted on me anyway.

The next consideration was my wardrobe. Over the years it had seemed that whenever I asked someone where they had bought a wonderful leather jacket etc. it was always a charity shop. So off I went to Age Concern. I did find a pristine Hilditch & Key dress shirt for £3.50, but it would have taken many more months of carrots and sweetcorn before I could do up the collar. I decided to wear what I already had until it fell apart. Averaged out over a year, that had to mean a saving of £150 per month.

So that was it, I had planned my urban downshift. And did I feel ready to loosen the shackles of work? No — I might have worked out how to save the equivalent of £770 per month but I felt miserable. I realised that if I couldn't drink mint chocolate martinis, eat in restaurants and shop in Bond Street, then I might as well move to Skye too. The only thing that cheered me up was a glass of champagne in the Met Bar. I later learnt that Madonna had been in that day, but I didn't see her — and I don't suppose she would want to learn Gaelic anyway.

TOP TIPS

- Forget designer water at £3 a bottle and ask for iced tap water in a jug
- Keep your head by becoming a hair stylist's model
- Scour the small ads for an old bike that nobody will want to nick
- Cultivate media chums for free cinema tickets and review copies of books
- Become a culture vulture by visiting museums during off-peak hours
- Get drunk at home before you go clubbing
- Stay well-read by joining the library where papers are free
- Forget the health club, play tennis in the park
- Reintroduce yourself to your old clothes, they may be back in fashion
- Stay in and play games - but no gambling

Overwhelmed by the fax of modern life

Junk faxes are intrusive, irritating and hard to stop, says Magnus Linklater

They slide out of your fax machine at strange hours of the day or night. They offer you mobile telephones, lists of building societies, repossessed houses, car insurers, cheap travel or cut-price alcohol. Sometimes they ask you unpleasant questions such as whether Myra Hindley should be hanged. Or they tell you unfunny jokes and offer to sell you more.

They are intrusive, irritating and each time they arrive, they cost you the price of a sheet of paper. Not only are they hard to stop, they are on the increase.

The junk fax is very big business. Because it comes through your telephone, it is harder to ignore than junk mail: it is there on your desk; it challenges you to discard it.

And it is very weird. Just before Christmas I was offered the chance to win all four Telenovelas in a competition which challenged me to name two of them. It was an offer I felt able to ignore. The Myra Hindley fax poll was rather different. Couched in the kind of language that would give a reputable pollster nightmares, it asked whether Hindley should be freed, paroled or left "to rot in jail".

Just in case I was in any doubt, a subsequent fax informed me that she and Ian Brady should have been hanged 31 years ago. This was followed by another poll, on hanging itself. To help to form my view, I was told: "Some do-gooders argue that the death penalty is not a deterrent. Well, it sure isn't going to encourage people, is it?"

Another poll, on paedophiles, suggested we could "solve the problem permanently by castrating them".

Peter Hetchon of Planet Telecom, which runs these surveys as well as doing marketing work for industry, told me he sent out 500,000 faxes on Hindley and had a response of nearly 9,000 votes. Since calls were charged at £1 a minute, it cost each voter, on average, £2 to take part. The result: 94 per cent, according to Hetchon, thought Hindley should be left "to rot in jail".

He sent the result to the Home Secretary, Jack Straw.

For most such as Planet Telecom, polls are merely a sideline to the really lucrative work which comes from business. Hetchon now has a database of 2.1 million fax numbers, and reaches about a million people each month with his fax polls for companies testing or selling products. The numbers come from "suppliers" who comb through fax directories, or from companies who turn over their customer lists in return for access to others.

"It's like collecting football cards," says Hetchon. "We do swaps."

His collection is about to increase dramatically. He intends to recruit 50 young people under the Government's back-to-work scheme to collect even more numbers and expand the business. And he is unrepentant about the irritation caused: "What would you rather do? Waste five minutes on the telephone listening to someone trying to sell you double-glazing, or study a fax at your leisure?"

If, nevertheless, you do resent it, you can ask Planet Telecom to take you off its list, and the company says it will oblige. The trouble is, you would have to contact a dozen other companies as well, some of them using an automatic random dialling system which scrolls through endless numbers until it scores a "hit".

There is a consumer protection agency called the Fax Preference Service. You can call it on 0541 554555 and ask it to shield your number from unwanted faxes. It will add you to its database and circulate your number to companies subscribing to it under the industry's self-regulating process. But Mr Hetchon will have nothing to do with it. "I'm infuriated by these people who want to outlaw us. You don't protect people from telephone surveys, why faxes?"

He complains that the FPS would charge him £1,000 a year for the privilege of editing numbers out of his system. Rather wearily, Tessa Kelly of the FPS says that it is a non-profit organisation simply trying to cover its costs. "The trouble is, Mr Hetchon doesn't understand or subscribe to the idea of self-regulation. He must be aware of the danger of legislation being brought in if the industry can't regulate itself."

Until that happens, it seems that the junk fax in all its horror is here to stay. The machine has just whirred into action again. This time it's from an outfit called Funnyfaxes. Have you heard the one about... no, it's so dreadful I can't bring myself to repeat it.

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Well saved, Gordon, now for your goal

The Budget should give us better services, says Anatole Kaletsky

What is Labour for? What is the point of a Labour Party which seems to be following most of the policies associated for generations with the Tories? Is there any solid intellectual content behind Tony Blair's Cheshire cat smile? Since May last year, these questions have, in one form or another, been on the mind of everybody interested in politics in Britain. A week from today, when Gordon Brown presents new Labour's first fully formed Budget, he will have the best chance to date to put forward a coherent answer.

The Chancellor made clear before the general election that Labour's economic strategy would not involve much in the way of income redistribution, the first function of the traditional welfare state. (However, the Budget is almost certain to involve some redistribution, namely a hefty increase in employers' national insurance contributions which, from a strict economic accounting standpoint, is not very different from an increase in the top rate of tax.)

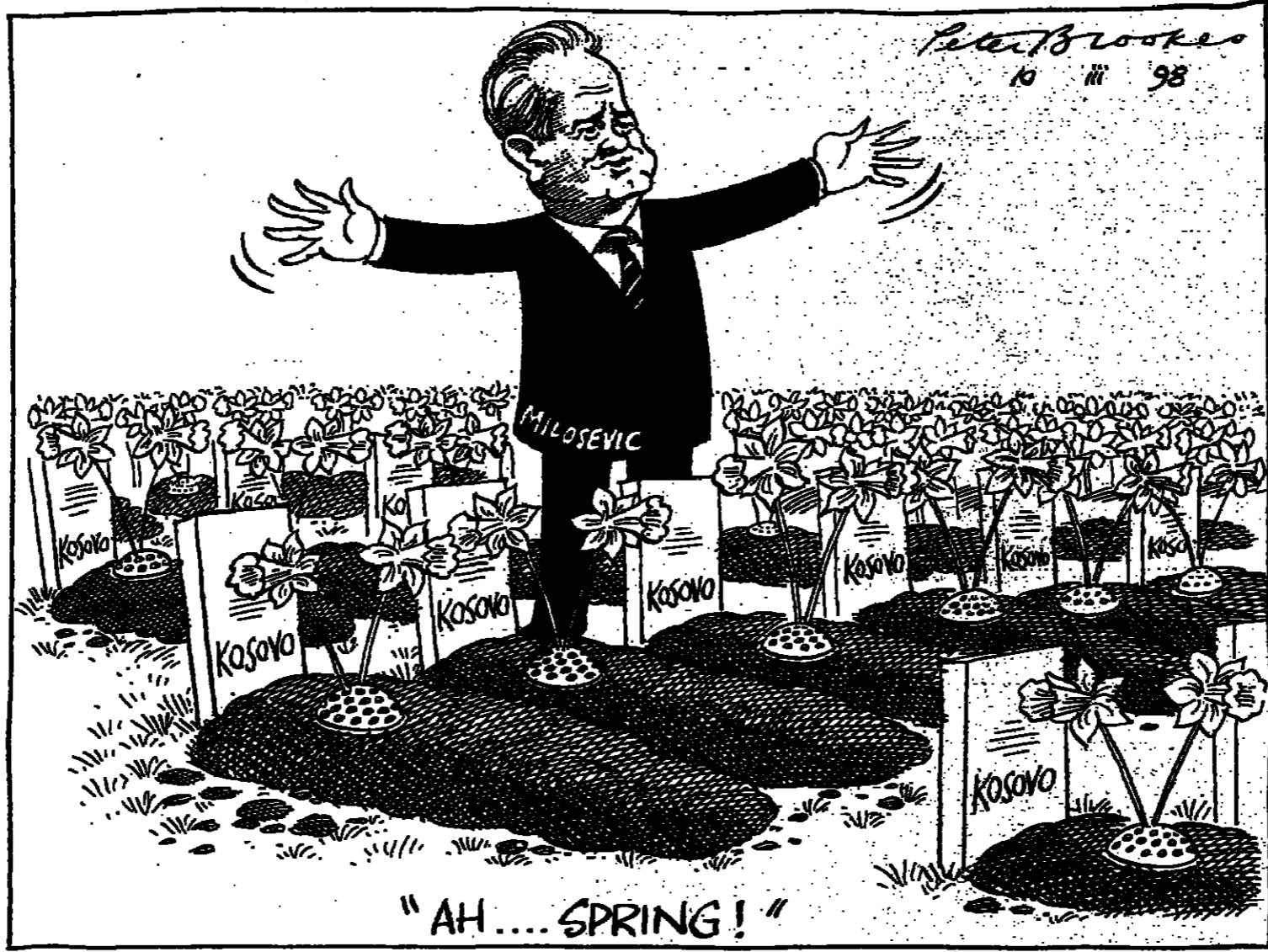
Mr Brown has also stated that the Budget will keep a tight grip on public spending, aiming at public expenditure levels which do not differ greatly from those planned by the Tories. But within these totals, there could be big changes which would justify the Government's claims to be pursuing a new political strategy, far closer to the social democratic ideals of the welfare state's founders than to the laissez faire individualism of the Tories. The great difference between the two parties is that new Labour politicians still deeply believe that education, health and many other public services should continue to be provided by the State and that their financing should be improved with the aim of making private health and education unnecessary and uncompetitive in the long run.

Private health and education would be redundant

These beliefs may or may not be right, but at least Mr Brown is likely to come up with a broad Budget strategy that will allow them to be tested. The essence of this strategy will be to try to save some of the money that now circulates through the insurance and savings mechanisms administered by the welfare state and redirect this into direct services — especially health and education. Mr Brown and his advisers believe that extra money could be found for education, health and other core public services by identifying cash welfare transfers in the "protective" category which have outlived their usefulness: for example, because certain types of unemployment and sickness insurance can now be provided by private insurance markets. But far larger sums could be made available in the long term by shifting funds from the third category of welfare spending — the retirement pensions which involve no real insurance element and are simply a substitute for private savings.

If this is Mr Brown's long-term strategy, he should begin to outline it now, well before the next election. He must put the emphasis on what he wants to achieve, and not just what he wants to save. He must explain what Labour's new welfare state will do for its citizens and not just what it will stop doing. Whether or not this welfare state will be successful may be an open question. But at least new Labour would have a vision that clearly differs from the social Darwinism of Margaret Thatcher and from the socialist dream of a cradle to grave nanny state.

But since then the Government has pointed out that budding Liam Gallagher should not draw the dote if they are not seeking a job. Many of McGee's pop star friends, so attuned to the passing noises of fashion, are also gearing up to kill off "Cool Britannia". The *New Musical Express* is to publish a feature headlined "Betrayed". The Labour Government's war on you." Jarvis Cocker, The Verve, The Charlatans, and Cerys of Catatonia (pictured with McGee) attack what the magazine calls the



Slaves to the work ethic

We should get off the treadmill and reward flexible employment schemes

This Government likes work: not without reason. It is named after it. Its members rise early and burn the lights late, growing visibly thinner, their eyes glittering with industriousness. Every policy demands a nation of worker-bees: getting off welfare, running mini-enterprises at nine years old, earning while disabled or post-natal, building its own pension fund. One imagines Tony Blair in church, applauding St Paul — "If any would not work, neither should he eat" — but starting to fidget and shred hassocks in frustration when confronted with Martha and Mary, or the lilies of the field (who, if you remember, flatly refused to toil, spin, or invest in private pensions). This will not do. Lilies are off-message. New Labour, new Work Ethic.

But I want more evidence that ministers are really thinking about work and what it is for. This paper yesterday carried a letter from 11 eminent signatories in academia, unions and industry, pointing out the rapid changes in the nature of employment: flexibility, insecurity, outsourcing, downsizing, multi-skilling, homeworking, portfolio careers, all that. The letter criticises the Government's "implicit assumption" that the future labour market will pay out enough to support its ideas on individual self-sufficiency, and calls for a commission on the subject.

I read the letter and cheered: not for a royal commission, God preserve us, but for the raising of what ought to be a big, open, adventurous national debate. The future of paid work affects every other policy: welfare, youth, the family, equality, crime, health, environment, community. Yet while work is undergoing seismic changes, even the most radical politicians still talk about it as if it were 1955. Presumably, they think this is all we understand.

We have to widen our understanding. I have lately been trawling through reports and predictions from institutions and academics of every hue (if you only have time for one source, try the Royal Society of Arts pamphlets labelled *Redefining Work*). They all agree that the first Industrial Age is nearly over and that "the job-shaped job" — full-time, secure, predictable — is a dinosaur. By 2020 we will speak of work not jobs, suppliers not employees, clients not bosses.

Try some facts. Work is shrinking: the average hour is now 25 times

more productive than it was in 1850. The paid working hours of individuals have fallen by more than 40 per cent in this century (take the long view, though, and they have gone up shockingly — arthurologists say that hunter-gatherers spent only 15 hours a week working). In the past five years, only one third of new jobs created was full-time. Of the unemployed who get back into work, only one in five finds a full-time, permanent job. The Henley Centre reckons that by 2010 less than half of all jobs will be full-time, and self-employment will have almost doubled.

Work is changing. One in a hundred — more than in coal, steel, and car manufacturing rolled together — is employed to answer the telephone in the vast new call-centres of banks, mail-order companies, helpines and so forth. These, in turn, are starting to disperse workers to their homes with computers and headsets. Ring Directory Inquiries and speak to a woman in a Hebridean cleft; order a CD from a television advertisement and your interlocutor is in Arkansas. (The CD is well east of Suez.) Ever more of these workers will be self-employed — "vendor employees", as surely as the wandering shepherds who stood with their crooks at hiring-fairs in Thomas Hardy's day.

Divisions widen. Fewer and fewer high-paid, high-stressed people manage this diaspora of workers: already more than 60 hours a week, and 40 per cent more than 50 hours, not counting commuting. They frantically spend money trying to disperse the stress. While leisure time grew by only 2 per cent in the Tory years, leisure spending grew by 150 per cent: think of those executive stair-cabobs full of unused squash kit. Meanwhile, 14 per cent of couples are "no-earner families" and the poorest 10 per cent of women part-timers get steadily poorer. Allowing for inflation, if such a woman earned £50 in 1979, she now gets £48 for the same work.

We spend man-hours in wild, weird ways, reflecting the costs of rush, traffic and broken communities. In the early 1970s only a quarter of seven-year-olds were accompanied to school, now only a tenth are not. We spend nine hundred million hours on school runs: allowing for traffic congestion, this costs about £10 billion. The stress of time-poor lives creates new needs: everybody "timeshifts" now, whether with e-mail, mobile phones or videos and seven-day shopping. Did I mention that the average man sleeps half an hour less than in 1960?

No more figures. The point is that — driven by technology and economic logic — the world of work is changing, and change brings opportunity. Forget royal commissions: ministers should plunge into radical, adventurous, side-ways thinking from first principles. Should we discourage downsizing by taxing it, or ration working hours by introducing a payroll tax, so that employers are inclined to spread 90 hours of work between three 30-hour workers rather than two 45-hour ones? Beyond that, what is work? What is useful? Should only earning bring respect? Why is it more worthwhile to ring up and pester people about double-glazing than to look after babies properly, or to keep old relatives out of council care? Should we be more rigorous in assessing the hidden cost of the must-work society, of dual incomes and limited parental time, fragmented communities and filthy cities?

There are impediments to creative thinking: one is our panic over the work ethic. The Government is terrified that the years of mass unemployment have killed this off. It has some reason. As a young reporter in the 1970s I remember the devastated shame of newly unemployed men, and their fear of being thought shirkers and spongers. But in areas of concentrated, incurable unemployment, much of that shame has worn off (although *The Fall Money* gave us poignant illustration of how much

has not). It would have been intolerably cruel to have kept the stigma alive, but its demise leaves government neurotically determined to defy the act of earning, in case whole tranches of society reject the very idea.

The other problem is women. If you reward family work, community work, voluntary work, and new parents who opt to have no more than a job-and-a-quarter between them, you get accused of pushing women back into the kitchen. It need not be so: with more, and more people operating mixed careers as "vendor employees", the companionate marriage could come of age. Both men and women — to the vast benefit of children — could reduce their earning hours while their families are young. Some already do.

We must chuck out the baggage of the first Industrial Age, and build a work ethic based on where we are, and what needs doing. Tax and incentives should not penalise those who lead useful lives with little or no market value. Government should be out there praising not just big exporters or glitzy high achievers, but those who are inventive and flexible about work: companies which offer term-time only contracts, employees who swap job security for flexibility and real lives, low-status workers such as cleaners who band together to offer agile, responsive contract services on their own terms. The Government must at least consider maverick projects such as a local exchange trading scheme, designed to bring new people into usefulness; it should pilot ward, worrying ideas scribbled on the Website of the Institute for Social Inventions. My current favourite is a local "labour tax" which everyone has to pay, and those on benefits are deemed to pay, but which (if you have time) you can claw back — or draw to supplement your benefit — by doing units of work the community needs.

It does not have to be the way it is: overwork and stress for some, idleness and disaffection for others, children and the weak neglected, the streets dirty and the schools decrepit and useful people laid off in the name of bigger corporate profits which mostly go abroad anyway. There is a great wave of change rolling, and the Government should get up on top of it, and surf.

Libby Purves

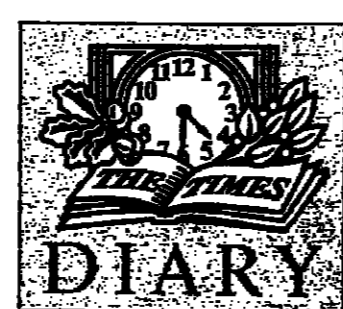
Gagging order

THE godfather of "Cool Britannia" has suggested that he was offered a gong in return for ceasing his attacks on Tony Blair. Alan McGee, manager of Oasis and adviser to Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, on the music industry, says he was told to "quieten down" by Labour after repeatedly attacking the Welfare to Work scheme. In return, he ventures, it was mooted that he might receive an honour. So cross does McGee claim to be that he has cancelled all meetings with ministers. "Labour are realising I am a big mouth and I'm getting quietly asked to quieten down. They want you to shut up. They're very subtle about it. People get bribed with OBEs, MBEs and Sir Alan McGees. I don't want one. They've got to deal with my criticisms. They can't stop my wages." McGee has been invited to soirées at No 10 where he chatted to Blair and gave £50,000 to Labour for the party's election fund.

But since then the Government has pointed out that budding Liam Gallagher should not draw the dote if they are not seeking a job. Many of McGee's pop star friends, so attuned to the passing noises of fashion, are also gearing up to kill off "Cool Britannia". The *New Musical Express* is to publish a feature headlined "Betrayed". The Labour Government's war on you." Jarvis Cocker, The Verve, The Charlatans, and Cerys of Catatonia (pictured with McGee) attack what the magazine calls the



"hideously reactionary" administration. McGee admits that he might be thrown out of Smith's mask force. But he can hit Labour where it hurts. "I'm not giving them any more money," he says. Comment, courtesy of the Tories' Alan Duncan: "Gags for gongs."



will visit Stowe and Brixton, their respective old stomping grounds, for a TV programme. I was very flattered that Darcus wanted such an unlikely companion." Perry tells me. I greatly supported Enoch Powell at the time of his "Rivers of Blood" speech but have since changed my views. His prophesy turned out to be untrue, and I now have a black niece.

Shooting star

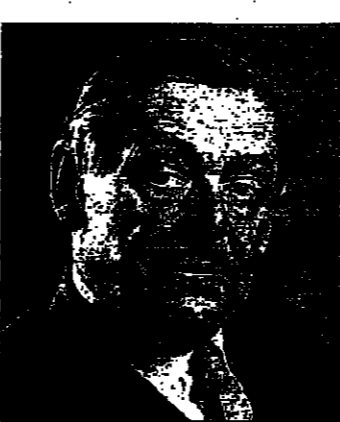
WHO was the first Tommy to bag a German in the war? The question is exercising soldiers as a Military Cross is to be auctioned. It was awarded to Brigadier John Alexander Mackenzie of the Gloucestershire Regiment, in January 1940 for "conspicuous daring and resource" after shooting at a 20-strong German patrol while on

listening duty in the Saar. His division commander had said to him: "You will get the first Jerry. Is that understood?", and newspapers reported it as "the first German casualty inflicted by the British Expeditionary Force". But the Imperial War Museum doubts that Mackenzie drew first blood. "There were nine brigades in that area. And there had been a lot of air activity since late 1939." As long as it was a Nazi who bought it first, I don't suppose it matters.

● JACK STRAWS attempt to uphold family values after a tricky Christmas has caused him a conflict of interest. The Home Secretary was to chair a meeting of the ministerial working group on the family, due to start at 8am, clashing with his school run. Straw, ever the family man, arrived late.

Better late...

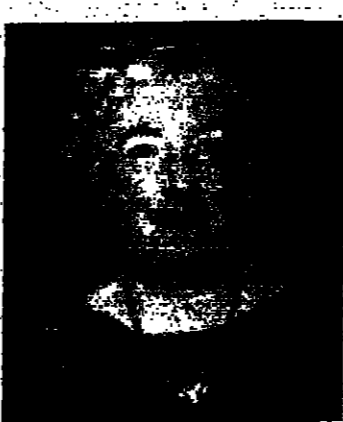
BARONESS Chalker of Wallasey has been elected an honorary fellow of the college that kicked her out more than 35 years ago. Queen Mary and Westfield College, part of London University apparently, confirms that the former Foreign Office Minister "did not complete" her studies in the early Sixties. A contemporary recourtesy: "There used to be a 10.30pm curfew at



T. S. Eliot's widow, Valerie, has been touring the world's auction houses to buy the poet's letters, and will not give up until she has them all. Admirers have waited for her latest collection for 1923-28 for nearly a decade. When the first volume appeared in 1988, Valerie — Tom's former secretary, who once sported bright yellow hair — hoped to "publish next year." It is a long process, admits Faber & Faber. "There are still letters out there. When she hears one of two have surfaced, she doggedly goes after them. We are happy to wait."

free play zones hold wide appeal

but when her time arrived Brinkley sat mate. "No noise was to be heard, therefore I recorded the Bill as not moved," ruled the Deputy Speaker. Friends of the Earth pondered six months of wasted campaigning: "Oh no." (Cue: muffled expletives.)



● HELEN BRINTON, the Millbank-controlled Labour MP, has performed a serious malfunction. Her Private Members' Bill on car-

JASPER GERARD

Westfield, which was then all-girls, and Lynda would roll in a bit later than that. So she was sent down." Very naughty, but the college is contrite: "Well, you have to make amendments somehow."

Don't lose your cool, Britannia

Douglas Hurd on the perils of Blair's rebranding

It is gracious of *The Times* to make me one of the sponsors of the new Britain ("Tories launched Cool Britannia", March 6), but I am in two minds about accepting the compliment. I need to know more about the child before I can agree to be with those bringing it to the front. John Lloyd's article on the Government's plan in the same issue (which "reveals a new all-out campaign to rebrand the nation") sounds authentic — and horrible.

Certainly it is wrong for a nation to live shrouded in the past, and it is right to use our energy to present effectively to the world what is new and adventurous in Britain. That is one reason why, as you report, I chose a notable modern design for our new Embassy in Berlin. That is why, after I visited Australia in 1993, we set in hand a special programme there about modern Britain, followed last year by a similar effort in New Zealand. That is why with Chatham House we organised in March 1995 a successful conference, replace with modern talent, on Britain's place in today's world. After the feverish debates on Maastricht, John Major and I were keen to open a serious debate on how we could best use our assets in the wider world. It is right that the Government should carry this forward, inevitable that they should clothe the effort in their new speak — and unsurprising that they should claim to have invented it.

Two words of warning are needed. If the Government tries to appropriate Britain's modern achievements for new Labour, it will make a hash of it. If the discussion becomes party political, every claim will be matched by a criticism. Instead of a chorus, there will be a hubbub, and we shall lose our overseas audience. Already we hear voices from the ranks of artists and designers protesting that they are being hijacked for the greater glory of a political party. By contrast we deliberately invited Robin Cook to speak at our London conference in 1995. Let the spin-doctors sylvan about in their own froth if that amuses them; but the Government should not deceive itself. The effective presentation of Britain has to last longer than the Government's present political honeymoon. Talent in a free country wears no party label.

The second warning is against pretending that the past is the enemy of the present. That simply does not work in a country with such a massive and amenable past as ours. In the past two centuries we have touched every corner of the globe, the first country ever to do so. It is no use encouraging our friends and customers to forget the images and traditions which we have made famous. The monarchy, the Houses of Parliament, cathedrals, country houses and village churches, pubs and ancient universities are not to be abandoned out of the consciousness of those with whom we deal. We couldn't do it even if we tried, and why on earth should we try? Just as this Labour Government stands on the shoulders of the Thatcher-Major achievements, so the British talent of which we are proud is a development, not a repudiation, of the past.

Let me offer two examples. Our analysis in 1995 pinpointed professionalism as one of Britain's main assets — professionalism in many fields, some new like financial services in a global economy, others traditional like the skill of our Armed Forces. I wonder how highly that skill is rated by the fashionable think-tanks that guide the Government. They may be tempted to relegate it to a past which they think irrelevant to the world of compassion, the Internet and the Millennium Dome. But anyone seriously examining what Britain has recently achieved, for example in the new countries of southern Africa, would put military professionalism high on the list. In Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and the new South Africa we were chosen to help to make professional armies out of politicised fighters who had spent years killing each other. Worth a pop concert or two — and perhaps more relevant to the needs of a torn continent.

Finally, there's the English language. In our 1995 analysis we naturally identified this as a stupendous asset. In recent years the British Council (and others) have transformed their techniques for turning this asset to good effect for Britain. But a few steps behind language comes literature. English drama, fiction, and poetry did not start on May 1, 1997. Tom Stoppard and Ted Hughes are subtle and splendid, but that is no reason for letting dust gather on William Shakespeare. In the end mine is not a polemic but a plea — to the Prime Minister, I suppose. Don't let the courtiers persuade you that the image can supersede reality. Don't snatch at a party advantage which will elude you. Don't believe that you promote the present by discarding or apologising for the past. The real richness of this small country is its amazing variety of talent; in which past and present intertwine. Let us all help you to encourage and be glad of that variety.

Lord Hurd of Westwell was Foreign Secretary from 1989 to 1995.



THE STRANGE REBIRTH

Liberal Democrats are victims of their own success

Ten years ago, when the Liberal Democrats came into being, they almost died at birth. There was not enough money to pay the staff's wages, their poll ratings barely registered and David Owen's "continuing" SDP threatened to cancel them out. Now the party is closer to power and better represented in the Commons than at any time since the war. Yet there is still a chance that, in another ten years, the Liberal Democrats will have ceased to exist.

If it happens, this will not be a sign of failure but a symptom of success. For the Labour Party under Tony Blair has adopted so many of the Lib Dems' ideas that the smaller partner's status as an independent party is looking unnecessary. The party that stood for decentralisation and environmentalism is seeing its passions adopted. What's left? — or rather, what's left, once Gordon Brown agrees to spend more on health and education, as he probably will?

The personal chemistry between Mr Blair and Paddy Ashdown is impelling the two leaders down a track that may lead to full coalition in the next decade. Already a coalition between the two parties is likely to happen after the first election for a Scottish parliament. Eventually, the Liberal Democrats at Westminster might look like the CDU in Germany — the junior partner to the Christian Democrats which reaches regional parts that the CDU cannot.

Some Lib Dem activists, particularly those fighting old Labour in municipal council chambers, find this idea very difficult to stomach. Like the Bennite Left of the Labour Party, they prefer purity to power. Some also suffer from a form of victim mentality: take away the victimhood and their identity is lost. Yet, if the realignment of the Left, so fervently sought by Liberal leaders for decades, is being

achieved, they cannot cavil that Mr Blair's party is sharing the spoils.

Mr Ashdown can claim much of the credit for bringing his party back from the brink. His bravery in the House of Commons has turned him from being a subject of ridicule to one of increasing respect. He never lost his nerve, even when his party came fourth to the Greens in the 1999 European elections. But if he wants partnership in power, rather than dissolution, he cannot afford to let up.

At the next election, disaffected ex-Tories who are not yet ready to return to the fold could find it easier to vote Labour than ever before. Having seen Mr Blair govern in a moderate, pro-market way, they will not easily be deterred by scare stories of rampant socialism. The Lib Dems' two recognisable policies, constitutional reform and higher spending on public services, will by then have been put into practice. If they do not do some innovative thinking, they will have little distinctive to offer.

Luckily the solution lies very close to home. The Government's biggest flaw is its authoritarian instinct, a form of cheap activism to which ministers resort when they cannot spend money. The Lib Dems should return to their liberal roots. So, for instance, they should support foxhunting, not because they approve of the sport but because they do not believe in banning pursuits of which they disapprove. Instead they have displayed the opportunism that so annoys their opponents: supporting hunting in their rural seats and opposing it in their urban seats.

Mr Ashdown has had his best moments when he has taken stands that were principled, often unpopular, but right. Supporting British passports for all Hong Kong residents was one such moment. Calling for airstrikes in Bosnia was another. The Lib Dem leader needs a new cause. Protecting the nation's liberties is the noblest of all and the closest to his party's heart.

MODERNISING MONARCHY

A process of reform requires a framework for change

Sixteen years ago Lord St John of Fawsley wrote in *The Times* that "the monarchy has become our only truly popular institution". The flood of fresh ideas floated by the Way Ahead Group would suggest that Buckingham Palace now feels less convinced of that statement. Through selective attribution, it has been hinted that the Royal Family is considering changes in titles, alterations to the Civil List, a much reduced emphasis on formality in the presence of the monarchy and enhanced public access to palaces. The Government apparently favours, and the Queen is contemplating, changes to the State Opening of Parliament and removing senior royals from a reformed House of Lords.

There are some who will oppose all of this as dangerous. They will assert, echoing Walter Bagehot, that the current court must not "let in daylight upon magic" — that more will be destroyed by embracing the fashion of the moment than can be salvaged. This would not appear an especially helpful or credible position. The monarchy should certainly be a symbol of continuity in a rapidly altering country. That is one of the strongest arguments for its retention. It cannot, though, be oblivious to the change around it. It is only by adaptation that the Crown through the centuries has survived.

That process requires more than a rapid procession of initiatives. It needs structure and substance. There is merit in some of the individual ideas that have emerged. However, there is also broader concern about the principle and purpose behind these efforts. The use of media leaks rather than official announcements has reinforced the sense that these decisions are somewhat *ad hoc* and lack a core theme or philosophy.

There appear to be three different alignments and agendas: those motivated by alarm at the decline in support for the mon-

archy; others specifically concerned for the standing of the Prince of Wales; and then that of the Government, which regards re-modelling of the monarchy as an element of its wider modernisation project. While there may be, at times, a coincidence of interest between them, conflict is also possible. All sides have awarded influence to opinion polls and focus groups in recent months and placed weight on short-term popularity.

There are obviously important issues affecting the Royal Family that require debate. These include primogeniture and the continued exclusion of Roman Catholics, the constitutional relationship between the Crown and other parts of the state and the links between the Royal Family and the Church of England. The one fundamental question that draws all these together concerns the role of the monarchy in the modern era. It remains uncertain what exactly this is. It must be more than charitable endeavours. It would do the Prince of Wales, in particular, little harm openly to outline the options in a set of speeches.

The management of the monarchy has never been a comfortable task. There have been periods of intense uncertainty before. The institution has usually strengthened itself through association with national incidents of vast consequence (such as empire or war) or events concerned with the succession itself. The Royal Family cannot determine such moments but it can prepare for them. This requires, as it has in the past, frank advice from adroit figures of independent authority. A sense of history, proportion and practicality is essential. It may be that this is already the central activity of the Way Ahead Group. The present pattern of press leaks, attention paid to polling, and the priority placed on a director of communications does not give that impression.

GENDER BENDERS

Correct grammar beats political correctness, even in France

Each of the seven women in the French Government is in future to be addressed as *Madame LA Ministre*. Lionel Jospin has decreed so in the official French *Journal* in order to court International Women's Day. And he is their Prime Minister. But language laughs at legislators. In trying to change their language by government circular, M Jospin and his Jospinettes are talking on an opponent far more slippery than the Anglo-Saxons, or even French farmers. For French grammar recognises no governments other than its own pretty rules.

Ministre, like most titles and descriptions of professions in French, is of the masculine gender. The designation of a doctor, director or mayor is masculine, even when the holder of that post is a woman: *Madame LE médecin*. Linguistic gender has no connexion with sex or "natural" gender. Female sailors and farmers were rare in Ancient Rome. But their occupations are in the feminine gender in Latin, the mother of all the Romance languages. A spoon is masculine (*le Couteau*), a fork is feminine (*la Fourchette*), and a knife is neuter (*le Couteau*).

Suspicious French feminists have recently published research suggesting that words of the feminine gender describe domestic items such as *une casserole* (a saucepan), while masculine words carry more prestige, like *un livre* (a book). Their evidence: is (*le*) *charabia* (gibberish). Even in languages

such as English, where gender is mercifully vestigial and recalled only in pronouns, countries, ships and vehicles are called "she" as well as "it". Gender is not a matter of feminine stereotypes, for "she" can be used in anger. Guns, tanks and trucks that refuse to work are still cursed as feminine.

This question of French gender is being debated with fit passion. The Académie française calls the Prime Minister's decree "a puerile gesture", and compares him to a pasha being bullied by his harem. Ms Segolene Royal, the *ministre* in charge of primary school education, replies, with genders removed, that the academicians are a bunch of sexist linguistic shellbacks.

The pressure to feminise masculine genders may come from French Canadians, Belgians and others who care more for political correctness than grammar. English has a similar problem, with chairwomen being addressed absurdly as pieces of furniture. Language does evolve, but not for official circulars. In any gender, why not go the whole *cochon* and have *la Ministresse*? Lawyers addressed as *Maitresse* could give the wrong impression. If the French are starting to find gender odd, then it will fade away, as it has in English. But the academicians are right to retard what they cannot repel and to palliate what they cannot cure. Even French, female masculine ministers have no right (or power) to alter French grammar.

Public interest in PM's 'leap of faith'

From Sir Richard Storey, Chairman of Portsmouth and Sunderland Newspapers

Sir, I cannot believe that Members of Parliament who, in our democracy, offer themselves to us as plenipotentiaries can legitimately claim any of their life as private.

Mr Blair personally has much proclaimed his Christianity, and his spokesman should not claim that public probing of the Prime Minister's religious faith is an "intrusion too far" [report, March 5; see also letters, March 7].

Some issues debated by Members of Parliament relate directly to the beliefs of a specific faith: the Act of Supremacy refers to the monarch's own faith; the Church of England is still "established"; in the UK there is a growing number of those with "Eastern faiths"; there are some religious beliefs that are regarded by the public with much suspicion; some people think that some faiths should be restricted, even proscribed.

No Member of Parliament can legitimately claim immunity from the electors' inquisitiveness into their personal faith, which must play so influential a part in their legislative activities on our behalf.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD STOREY,
Chairman, Portsmouth and Sunderland Newspapers,
Buckton House,
39 Abingdon Road, W8 6AH,
March 6.

From the Chief Press Secretary to the Prime Minister

Sir, I found Matthew Parris's article on prime ministers and religion interesting ("Blair's leap of faith", March 6). However, his description of a Labour Party press officer seeking to gain best possible coverage of Tony Blair at prayer creates a false impression. As the Prime Minister sees his faith as an entirely private matter, it is an impression I hope you will allow me to correct.

The only occasions on which the press have attended church with the Blairs are at the traditional service on the Sunday of party conference week (a tradition developed under previous leaders) and on one occasion close to the general election, when a huge processional parade took place at church and had to be marshalled by a press officer so as not to disturb other churchgoers.

As he has also, it is true, written an article for *The Sunday Telegraph* about his faith (April 7, 1996), as this led to him being falsely accused of being a convert to Christianity and Christianity are incompatible, it is not an exercise he intends to repeat, despite the offers that arrive on a regular basis.

We are also considering whether to suspend the arrangements under which the media, at their request, are allowed access to the pre-conference service.

Yours sincerely,
ALASTAIR CAMPBELL,
Chief Press Secretary to the Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street, SW1A 2AA,
March 6.

From the Reverend Richard Jenkins

Sir, As a Church of England priest I am found, like Mr Blair, in Roman Catholic churches praying, and even attending the celebration of Mass.

Does this mean that I too will convert to Catholicism, or — in all but outward show — have already done so? Or could it be that the Prime Minister, like me, has already been converted to ecumenism?

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD JENKINS,
Assistant Ecumenical Officer,
Diocese of Wakefield,
St Paul's House, Queen's Drive,
Barnsley, South Yorkshire S75 2QG.
r.jenkins@aol.com
March 6.

Balfour's doubts

From Mr Christopher Montgomery

Sir, Matthew Parris, in his run-through of the religious allegiances of recent prime ministers (article, March 6), suggests that Arthur Balfour "was reputed to be an atheist", and in so doing refers to Balfour's book, *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt*.

In as much as we can ever know something as private and profound as another man's religious belief, we can be reasonably sure that Balfour was a convinced Christian.

Barbara Tuchman, in *The Proud Tower* (Macmillan, 1966), corrects those who may have assumed from the title of Balfour's book that he was championing agnosticism:

In fact, by expressing doubt of material reality, the book was paradoxically asserting the right to spiritual faith, a position more explicitly stated in his later book, *The Foundations of Belief*.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER MONTGOMERY,
108 Horseshay Road,
London SW1P 2EF.
March 6.

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 3046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Action needed on Algerian atrocities

From the Director of the UN Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Chief Executive of the Refugee Council

The appalling and continuing atrocities in Algeria require urgent action by the international community as a follow-up to the European Union ministerial visit to Algiers in January and the UN Secretary-General's earlier offer of his good offices in seeking an end to the violence.

On March 10 the United Nations Commission on Human Rights will begin its meeting in Geneva. It is essential that Algeria should appear on its agenda.

When Lord Avebury questioned Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office) in the House of Lords on February 9, he informed her that, in a recent conversation with the Algerian Ambassador, he had discussed the need for the UN special rapporteurs on torture and extra-judicial executions to be invited by his Government to visit Algeria.

The Ambassador replied that this could only be considered if the Commission on Human Rights first adopted a resolution. He said that his Government would go to the commission with a statement, following which it would be possible to discuss the terms

and conditions of such a visit. In fact, this is not correct, since in 1993 his Government invited such a visit, so that there is no need for a resolution. They now appear to be going back on that invitation.

There are many precedents for action being taken by interested parties actually to prevent key issues from ever getting on to the commission's agenda. It would, of course, be infinitely preferable for the rapporteurs to visit Algeria before consideration of the crisis by the commission, so that the latter could consider their reports; but, if that is not possible, then the evidence of other parties can be called for.

What is essential is that the Algerian tragedy should be fully discussed in the commission and we urge our Government and all other sympathetic members of it to do everything possible to ensure that this happens.

Yours sincerely,
MALCOLM HARPER,
Director,
United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
N. HARDWICK,
Chief Executive, Refugee Council,
3 Whitehall Court,
London SW1A 2EL,
March 9.

Chemical mergers

From Mr Edward Collier

Sir, Professor Bryan Reuben usefully notes in his letter (March 3) that "mergers between large pharmaceutical companies are not always successful". How right he is — and he will not be surprised to learn that this is also true of other industries.

Our own analysis shows that a disturbing number of mergers and acquisitions continue to destroy shareholder value rather than create it. In fact, in the 1990s in the US market only a whisker over half of merged companies (52 per cent) have outperformed the average for their industry — regardless of their stated strategic intent. In the 1980s it was even worse, at just over two out of five. Moreover, the larger the deal the worse the track record, with only one in four of the larger deals providing a better than average return to their shareholders.

In this context, perhaps investors in larger companies should be comforted that, at least statistically, their returns have a better than even chance of outperforming the sector average when corporate marriages dissolve at the altar.

The differentiating factor is clearly

not one of strategy but in the management of the process once the ink is dry.

Yours faithfully,
EDDY COLLIER
(Partner),
Mercer Management Consulting,
1 Grosvenor Place, SW1X 7JL,
edward.collier@mercer.com
March 3.

From Mr Caspar Rock

Sir, Professor Reuben fails to mention the true rationale behind the Glaxo Wellcome/SmithKline Beecham merger and what he calls the "notorious" "short-termism" of the City's enthusiasm for such unions. The main driver of these deals is to merge the sales and administration functions and cut costs so that extra cashflow can be reinvested in research and development to improve future prospects. To call the Ciba-Geigy/Sandoz merger unsuccessful at this stage is patently unfair on the new company, Novartis.

Yours faithfully,
CASPAR ROCK
(Director), Framlington
Investment Management,
155 Bishopsgate, EC2M 3JL,
caspar.rock@framlington.co.uk
March 3.

Service overseas

From Mrs J. Dalton

Sir, I was interested by the letters you published on March 4 about the shortage of volunteers for service overseas.

Last May, just prior to her final examinations in marine biology, my daughter responded to an advertisement from VSO wanting marine biologists to work in the Philippines.

I was shocked when some weeks later she received a curt letter telling her that she was ineligible on two counts — that she was too young at 22, and also that she had not had two years' work experience. The fact that she had done conservation work in Indonesia during her gap year apparently counted for nothing.

VSO cannot have its cake and eat it. It is no use complaining that young people are not volunteering for work in the Third World as they used to and then turning them down, even when they are well qualified, on the grounds of lack of age and experience.

My daughter went on to obtain a good degree.

Yours faithfully,
JENNIFER DALTON,
Lavender Cottage,
Church Street,
Rudgwick, West Sussex RH12 3EH,
March 7.

From the Director of Youth For Britain

Sir, In our experience there is no shortage of young people willing to volunteer for working overseas. On the contrary there is a huge reservoir of idealism and talent that is largely untapped. The problem that young people experience is finding a placement that exactly matches their circumstances — time available, start date, type and location of voluntary work, etc.

Youth For Britain, established in 1994, has set up a comprehensive computer database of volunteering opportunities for 16 to 25-year-olds. We are able to match volunteers' requirements against those of 750 organisations offering over 250,000 placements annually throughout the UK and worldwide. We are currently aware of projects in 214 countries.

Individual organisations clearly cannot be infinitely flexible. However, it should be possible for potential volunteers to find an appropriate organisation from the huge number that exist — provided that they know of their existence.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER POTTER,
Director, Youth For Britain,
Higher Orchard, Sandford Orcas,
Sherborne, Dorset DT9 4RP,
March 6.

Mosley and Disraeli

From Lady Mosley

Sir, In "I witnessed a Mosley riot" (feature, March 6), Mr L. W. Bailey's memory plays him false when he suggests that Oswald Mosley "attacked" Disraeli.

My husband was a great admirer of Disraeli, and even discussed with the publisher Hamish Hamilton the idea of writing a book about him. Unfortunately, it was never written.

Yours faithfully,
DIANA MOSLEY,
Le Temple de la Gloire,
Orsay, 91400 France,
March 6.

No doubt about it

From Mr Michael Haigh

Sir, I was interested to read (report, March 3) that "The finding suggests that dyslexia is caused by deficient brain functioning, and is a real phenomenon, something that has been doubted".

Yours etc,
M. HAIGH,
Widgeon Wood,
The Chase, Woburn Common,
Buckinghamshire HP10 0LN,
March 4.

Moon water leads to flights of fancy

From Sir David Nicholas

Sir, ITN broadcast many hours of live coverage of American astronauts exploring the Moon's surface during the Apollo 11 to Apollo 17 missions in 1969-72. Alastair Burnet was the presenter and I was the producer.

For one of the moonshots, Dr George Mueller, former head of NASA's manned spaceflight programme, was a commentator in the studio. One evening over dinner, he confided to us his fantasy of lunar colonisation. He was convinced there was plentiful frozen water there, then the evidence of other parties can be called for.

Using nuclear reactors, he would boil off the water locked in the permafrost to build an atmosphere round the Moon.

The Moon could be a wonderful leisure centre. A golfer who can make a 150 yard tee shot on Earth would carry 900 yards on the Moon. A high-jump athlete could clear the equivalent of a suburban bungalow.

The problem, Dr Mueller said, was that the man-made atmosphere, anchored only by one sixth of Earth's gravity, would eventually spin off.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID NICHOLAS
(Deputy Editor, ITN, 1963-77; Editor, 1977-89; Chairman, 1989-91),
Lodge Stables,
Kidbrooke Park Road, SE3 0LW,
March 8.

From Mrs Elizabeth B. Nicholson

Sir, Your leading article, "Water on the Moon", suggests "Civilisation could indeed be transplanted" to the Moon. Would not the greatest demonstration of civilisation on Earth be a global agreement to leave the Moon serene, beautiful and unexploited?

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH B. NICHOLSON,
50 Gillhurst Road,
Harborne, Birmingham B17 8PB,
March 6.

From Mr Quentin Morris

Sir, We are told that there is water on the Moon. How long might it be before some future Lunar Water Authority declares a restriction on its use, due perhaps to the profligacy of "space age" travellers, or even "a period of prolonged drought"?

Yours faithfully,
QUENTIN R. V. MORRIS,
110 Eton Rise,
Eton College Road, NW3 2DD,
q.morris@rsceng.ac.uk
March 6.

From Mr Kenneth H. Craik

Sir, In light of the discovery of water on the Moon and the many proposals already made for its use, is it too late to organise a lunar water conservation movement?

Yours etc,
KENNETH H. CRAIK,
70 Great Percy Street, WC1X 9QU,
March 6.

Eating out

From Mr Nicolas Owen

Sir, Your leading article today, "Voucher for a Princess", is quite right when it says that "the country restaurant is one of winter's treats". How sad it is then that many country restaurants and inns will be driven out of business if the draconian new drink-driving limits are brought in.

Amateur gourmets may be able to drive to the restaurant of their choice, but they will not be able to drink wine with their meal unless they intend to stay the night.

Yours faithfully,
NICOLAS OWEN,
1 Bruce Grove, Orpington BR6 0HF,
n.owen@mcmail.com
March 3.

Dish of the day

From Dr Robin Weller

Sir, At the annual dinner of the Bristol Medico-Legal Society on February 27, 153 members and guests were present. Apart from ten vegetarians, only three people declined to eat the selected main course. This was fillet of beef — British beef.

This may be of interest to others planning menus for formal dinners. They can stop ducking the issue, stop fishing around for alternatives, and stop chickening out of providing what most of us enjoy — beef.

I remain, yours sincerely,
R. M. WELLER (President),
Bristol Medico-Legal Society,
2 Miles Road,
Clifton, Bristol BS8 2JN,
March 3.

Grand fix

From Mr David Milsted

Sir, In view of the result of the Australian Grand Prix (letter, Sport, March 9) the Government should ban Formula One racing. It is bringing smoking into disrepute.

Yours,
DAVID MILSTED,
Keston, Newbury,
Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4HZ,
March 9.

OBITUARIES

LORD DONALDSON OF KINGSBRIDGE

Lord Donaldson of Kingsbridge, OBE, former Minister for the Arts, died on March 8 aged 90. He was born on October 9, 1907.

Few people have operated so successfully in so many fields as Jack Donaldson. He was a government minister, a soldier, a farmer, a prison reformer, a consumer champion and a patron of the arts. To all these activities he brought great talents, zest and charm.

His background did not suggest that he would develop into a lifelong socialist. His father was the Rev S. A. Donaldson, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and his mother was Lady Albinia Donaldson, daughter of the Earl of Buckinghamshire. But the general strike of 1926 changed his life. He joined the Labour Party and remained a member until 1931 when, despairing of his party's chaotic state, he became one of the first peers to cross to the Social Democrats. Though he contemplated rejoining Labour in later years, his sense of loyalty kept him with the Liberal Democrats and he was one of their spokesmen for many years in the House of Lords.

John George Stuart Donaldson went to Eton and then to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he gained a double first in law and moral sciences. His first experience of practical social work came with the pioneering Peckham Health Centre, in many ways a forerunner of the National Health Service. The centre was started largely as a result of his substantial financial contribution, and he worked there for three years.

He joined the Royal Engineers at the outset of war and served in North Africa, Persia, Italy and North-West Europe before being demobilised as a lieutenant-colonel. In Naples he met Denis Healey for the first time. Healey, the beach master at Anzio, was his staff captain and Donaldson described him as "the first officer I met who was more intelligent than I was".

Donaldson had been married in 1935 to Frances Lonsdale, daughter of Frederick Lonsdale, the playwright, and at the beginning of the war, foreseeing what lay ahead, she bought a farm to feed, among others, her three children and herself. When Donaldson was



demobilised, farming became his main interest. The two farms in Gloucestershire and eventually in Buckinghamshire at Kingsbridge, from which he took his title, did not all work, however. The Donaldsons were generous hosts and leading Labour figures, including Gaitskell and Crosland, were regular visitors. His social conscience concentrated for a time on penal affairs and from 1965 to 1974 he was chairman of the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders. He had earlier been honorary secretary of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society and on the Board of Visitors at Grendon Prison. When he was summoned to No 10

to become a member of the Wilson Government in 1974, the message had to be sent to Wormwood Scrubs where he was visiting a notorious homosexual prisoner. It was activities of this kind which prompted Evelyn Waugh, a near neighbour in Gloucestershire and not a man noted for his love of the human species, to describe Donaldson in his diaries as a saint — a description which Donaldson said he spent the rest of his life trying to live down. Donaldson, who had been made a reluctant peer in 1967, was offered by Wilson a post either in the Northern Ireland Office or at Consumer Affairs. Donaldson chose Northern Ireland as less

boring. Subsequent events proved his decision well-founded. He did not come into his own ministerially until Callaghan, a fellow farmer, made him Arts Minister. He was named as Minister of State at the Department of Education to take on this post, a sign of his increased standing, as Hugh Jenkins, his predecessor, had been merely an Under-Secretary.

Donaldson, though hampered by Whitehall's usual lack of money, performed manfully on behalf of the arts. Museums, in particular, benefited from his activities. He had previous experience of arts administration as a director of the Royal Opera House and of Sadler's Wells. Music had always been his great passion. When his mother bought him a house in Sloane Street before the war he used it for a time to house a string quartet. He was the founder of the Quartet Society and was a notable patron of what was then called modern architecture. He commissioned Walter Gropius to build The Wood House at Shipbourne and John Winter to build another house in Sussex.

The death of his wife, Frances, in 1994, was a blow from which he never recovered completely, though he continued to attend the House of Lords until the end of last year. Their partnership, between two strong personalities, was always one of equality. She it was who introduced him to farming, and the first book of her considerable literary career was in fact on wartime agriculture. She grew up accompanying her playwright father in an exciting progress through prewar London and New York social life. From her experiences came her most successful book, *Child of the Twenties*. Her later books included *Prædilectus*, the biography of her father, *Edward VIII*, which won her the basis of a successful television series, and *Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of a Country Neighbour*.

Donaldson had been appointed OBE in 1943 for his war service in Italy. His many offices included those of president of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, chairman of the Consumers' Council and director of the British Sugar Corporation. He is survived by his son and two daughters.

LEONIE RYSANEK

Leonie Rysanek, Austrian soprano, died in Vienna on March 7 aged 71. She was born on November 14, 1926.

She made her debut in 1949 in Innsbruck as Agathe in Weber's *Freischütz*. The voice was clearly already opulent enough for this heavy weight role. She had a spell with the Saarbrücken Opera before in 1951 landing the part of Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* in the first postwar Bayreuth Festival. The choice was made by Wieland Wagner, who had a penchant for sopranos who looked good and could act as well as sing.

LEONIE RYSANEK's operatic career was long, spanning nearly fifty years. Her retirement was all too short. In 1996, when she was approaching 70, she embarked on her round of farewells to her favourite houses, starting with the Met in New York, where she first appeared in 1959. There she said goodbye with the small role of the Countess in Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades* in an adoring public. Salzburg heard her for the last time as Klytemnestra in *Elektra*. Later Vienna, city of her birth, upbringing and of her death, put on an evening in her honour at the State Opera, a rare privilege.

In her late fifties Rysanek had considered giving up singing and passing on the heavy weight roles in Wagner and Richard Strauss, for which she was justly renowned, to other hands and voices. It was an invitation from the Australian Opera to play the Kostelnicka in Janacek's *Jenufa* which made her change her mind. It was a success and persuaded her to rebuild a career as a mezzo specialising in wicked old women. The *Kabanochka* in Janacek's *Kajko Kubanow* followed, as did Herodias in Strauss's *Salome* — not so old perhaps but certainly not short of depravity. It was a far cry from the glamorous heroines of Rysanek's youth, but these half-centuries kept her on stage, and the stage was where she had always belonged.

She made some outstanding records, notably with Karajan, but never much cared for the studios, claiming almost to despise them. However, she did authorise a few years ago the re-release of a number of Italian arias recorded in the late 1950s. She believed that she needed the theatre to show off her poise, her good looks and most of all the sheer intensity of her performance. She could easily have been a straight actress, but opera claimed her when she was a child. Her father, a stonemason of modest means, took her to a performance of *Fidelio* when she was eight and the experience proved unforgettable. She went to the Vienna Conservatoire during the war years, where she studied with Alfred Jerger, the first Mandryka in Strauss's *Arabella*.



It established Rysanek as a Wagnerian of high quality and led to a number of further Bayreuth appearances, including Senta in *Der fliegende Holländer*, the role with which she made her American debut, in San Francisco, in 1956.

By that time she was already attached to the Bavarian State Opera and then the Vienna State Opera, both of which developed her as a Strauss singer. It is for Strauss and especially his middle and late operas — *Die ägyptische Helena*, *Frau ohne Schatten* and *Die Liebe der Danae* — for which she will be best remembered. London first heard her in 1953 when the Munich company came to Covent Garden in 1953 with a trio of then little-known Strauss works. Rysanek was given the title role in *Danae*, although she was not allowed to sing it on the first night. However, she made a big enough impression in two later performances for the Royal Opera to engage her for *Chrysothemis* in *Elektra* the next year and for Sieglinde the one after that. She returned as Elsa in *Lohengrin* and

also as an imperious Tosca. But the Garden was never really her house, and she was not heard there after 1963.

At the Met, though, she was queen. In 1959 she made an unexpected debut as Lady Macbeth in the house's first staging of *Macbeth* since 1876. The general administrator had set a good deal of store by the production, which at the time was the most expensive the house had ever mounted. The casting was to match: Leonard Warren in the title role, Jerome Hines as Banquo, Bergonzi as Macduff and Callas as Lady Macbeth. Shortly before the first night Bing had a double blow: Callas stormed out; and the conductor, Dimitri Mitropoulos, had a heart attack. Bing turned to the young Austrian, whom he had already engaged for *Don Carlo*, to help him out of the soprano difficulty, and he devised one of his typical stratagems to help her on her way.

He employed a claqueur to shout "Brava Callas" on Lady Macbeth's first entry, as far from Rysanek's earshot as possible but loudly enough to spur the audience into support for the replacement underdog. It worked, and Rysanek got an ovation. But then she might well have got one anyway. Few liked the production, but Rysanek was established in New York.

Her 25th anniversary with the house, to which she returned season after season, was celebrated with a gala concert in 1984. It was at the Met that she sang many of her major Italian roles, including *Elisabetta* in *Don Carlo* and *Abigaille* in *Nabucco*.

In Vienna she was also known for the breadth of her repertory and did not disdain going up to the Volksoper for an appearance in *Lehar's Merry Widow*. She knew what she wanted and was ready to stand up to the most autocratic of conductors, including Karajan; she rejected all his blandishments to do *Salome* for him. Even Böhm, who taught her much about Strauss, consented to be contradicted. Rysanek, at her peak and a voice that reached up to the stars — and she knew she was one of them. She was married first to Rudolf Grossman, one of her singing teachers and with whom she appeared on stage a number of times. After divorce she married Ernst Gausman in 1968.

BRIGADIER E. D. SMITH

Brigadier E. D. Smith, CBE, DSO, Gurkha commander, died on March 7 aged 74. He was born on August 19, 1923.

AMONG his Gurkha soldiers the name of "Birdie" Smith was synonymous with courage. As a 21-year-old company commander of 2nd Battalion 7th Gurkha Rifles he was awarded an immediate DSO for gallantry during the Eighth Army's offensive up Italy's Adriatic coast in September 1944. The citation suggests that he must have missed the Victoria Cross by the narrowest margin.

Under Field Marshal Kesselring's skillful leadership, the German Army contested every village and river line in order to delay the Allies' advance on Central Europe from the south. On the night of September 3-4, 1944, the 2nd/7th Gurkhas were ordered to take the village of Tavolero, which had been fortified to the last house and barn. Smith's C Company was given the task and, despite a vicious spilling attack by the enemy two hours earlier, he crossed the start line on time at midnight. Almost at once, his leading platoons were halted by intense Spandau machinegun

fire from the village. Smith rallied and led them forward to destroy the first Spandau post by throwing in grenades and killing off its occupants with his Thompson sub-machinegun. He was wounded in the leg and his company suffered 35 men killed or wounded before they reached the outskirts of the village. Two hours of hand-to-hand fighting ensued, with Smith leading the attack on each house and barn, killing many of the enemy himself by hurling grenades through the windows and into the German trenches. Ignoring his wound, he allowed the enemy no

respite and by 0400 hours on September 4 he was able to gather the still-standing remnants of C Company, clear the last group of buildings and report the village in his hands. The Germans retreated at once with mortar fire but, anticipating a counter-attack, Smith deployed his 28 remaining men with such tactical skill that they were able to hold their ground until the rest of the battalion reached them at midday on September 4 on their way to the final objective. Birdie Smith had close affinity with the Gurkha soldier whose sobriquet "Bravest of

the Brave" stands unchallenged. When Indian Partition came in 1947, six regiments of Gurkha Rifles became part of the Indian Army and four transferred to British service. Initially, the latter group faced bewildering change and the flow of recruits through onerous transit camps en route for Malaya, began to falter. Smith was selected to form a new camp in Calcutta and then command one in Singapore. His example and leadership restored confidence and recruit levels quickly regained their traditionally high level. Eric David Smith was born at Copar, Fife, and educated at All Hallows School. With no intention of becoming a professional soldier, he enlisted during the war and was selected for the Officers' Training School, Bangalore, from where he was commissioned into the 7th Gurkha Rifles in October 1942. His restless stance and beaky nose earned him the nickname Birdman which, shortened to Birdie, remained with him for life. After service in Italy, he went to Greece in 1945, where 2nd/7th Gurkhas formed part of the Allied force sent to support the Athens Government in the civil war which broke out following the German withdrawal. He then served with his regiment in the Malaya Emergency, for which he was appointed MBE in 1952. Staff College and various staff appointments followed. One staff appointment was outside the traditional Gurkha postwar environment — in Cyprus, during the Eoka insurrection in the late 1950s. The Indonesian confrontation with the enlarged Federa-



Smith, left, with Major-General Pat Crawford who, as a young MO, had amputated his arm in Borneo in 1964

tion of Malaysia of 1963-66 found Smith serving as Second-in-Command of 2nd/7th Gurkhas but already nominated to command 1st/2nd Gurkhas Rifles. In his last mission with the battalion he knew so well, he set out by helicopter from Sibau on the upper Rajang River to visit a forward company, together with the battalion medical officer, Captain Pat Crawford, and six riflemen. The engine stalled on approach to the helipad landing site, plunging the helicopter and its occupants in a series of somersaults onto its back at the jungle edge. The accompanying Gurkhas scrambled clear unhurt, but Smith was trapped by his arm in the wreckage amid the

stench of leaking oil from the overheated engine. Having ordered the riflemen to stand clear in case of fire, Crawford and Major Douglas Moore, the local company commander, crawled to where Smith hung by his crushed arm. Diagnosis that amputation was the only chance took Crawford only seconds but the operation, using a claspknife sharpened on a stone and without anaesthetic, took almost an hour. While Moore struggled to support the two men in the upturned and tilted fuselage, Crawford improvised a tourniquet and severed the arm. Smith had remained conscious and silent throughout. In his book *Wars Bring Scars* he wrote of the incident. "I sensed that the Gurkha soldiers of B Company were now grouped around the wreckage. Bravest of the brave, how often had I seen their courage when wounded in battle. Now I had to try to live up to their standards, to show that I was worthy to be one of their officers." Captain Pat Crawford was awarded the George Medal for his cool gallantry in the smouldering wreck and his professional skill, which saved Smith's life. After recovery from this appalling experience, the one-armed Birdie Smith commanded 1st/2nd Gurkhas in Borneo until the end of confrontation in 1966, and then in Brunei and Hong Kong. Promoted colonel, he served with the Defence Intelligence Staff in London until, to his own and his many friends' delight, he was appointed brigadier commanding the Gurkha recruiting bases in Nepal. For this service he was appointed CBE shortly before he retired from the Army in 1978. On retirement, he returned to Devon, where his parents had lived before and during the Second World War. He became a barrister and then chairman of governors of St John's School, Sidmouth. He was also chairman of Sidmouth Town Council and president of the local branch of the Royal British Legion. He wrote several books about his beloved Gurkha riflemen and their campaigns 1952-1959, and served as Colonel of 7th Gurkha Rifles from 1975 to 1982. He had married, in 1957, Jill Waycott, daughter of Brigadier Jack Waycott, late Royal Artillery. His wife survives him, together with his two daughters.

PERSONAL COLUMN

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FLASHPOINT AS BRITON MOB HURTS MISSILES AT RIOT POLICE

By Richard Duce Violence erupted on the streets of Britton, south London, last night, when the main threat of riot unrest seemed to have been averted. Running battles broke out between police and protesters whose ranks were swelled by local youths after a crowd of 2,000 people had dispersed from outside the town hall. In the hours leading up to the violence, the crowd had appeared good natured. Police were hopeful of avoiding the violence and looting seen in Hackney on Thursday. 6.00pm: A crowd of about 300 gathers outside Lambeth town hall with chants of "Break the law not the poor" and swells in size, starting to spill out of Acre Lane. 7.00pm: The crowd blocks Acre Lane but police, maintaining a low-key presence, do not intervene. 7.30pm: Speakers start addressing the cheering crowd as an effigy of Mrs Margaret Thatcher is burnt. 9.30pm: The crowd starts to march down Acre

ON THIS DAY March 10, 1990 Mr MacPlynn Mulligan, aged 19, from Britton, was at the front of the crowd. He said: "We were just out to protest against the poll tax. But it seemed militant and rioters got involved. When they saw the police the mob went mad." Moments earlier, youths had surrounded a police Metro car and initially trapped two officers. According to one witness, two youths jumped on to the bonnet and started kicking the windscreen. The mob grew and began thrusting staves through the smashed windscreen. The two officers were dragged clear from the wreck of the car. 9.55pm: Fresh violence erupts in Britton High Street between police and demonstrators. Police in riot gear rush the crowds after a line of about 20 police horses is pelted with bottles and other missiles. Dozens of demonstrators filtered down neighbouring streets and clashes spread. 10.00pm: Police charge the demonstrators, occupying the steps of the town hall and make several arrests. There are still crowds on Britton Hill and police snatch squads make forays into fragmented crowds. Stones are thrown from near St Matthew's Church. Dozens of police charge into the churchyard and arrest two men.

Court of Appeal

Theft in sale of unexpired ticket

Regina v Marshall, Regina v Coombes, Regina v Eren

Before Lord Justice Mantell, Mrs Justice Ewbank and Judge Martin Stephens QC [Judgment March 6]

A person who acquired another's unexpired ticket and sold it on could be guilty of theft.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, so held in dismissing appeals by Adrian John Marshall, Robert Peter Coombes and Brol Eren against their convictions in March 1997 at Southwark Crown Court (Judge Hardy) on pleas of guilty to theft and attempted theft.

Marshall and Coombes were put on probation for two years and Eren was ordered to serve 40 hours community service.

Section 6 of the Theft Act 1968 provides: "(1) A person appropriating property belonging to another without meaning the other permanently to lose the thing itself is nevertheless to be regarded as having the intention of permanently depriving the other of it if his intention is to treat the thing as his own to dispose of regardless of the other's rights; and a borrowing or lending of it may amount to so treating it if, but only if, the borrowing or lending is for a

period and in circumstances making it equivalent to an outright taking or disposal."

Mr Nigel Taylor, assigned by the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, for Marshall and Coombes; Mr Jonathan D. Simpson, assigned by the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, for Eren; Mr Roger Smart for the Crown.

LORD JUSTICE MANTELL, giving the reserved judgment of the court, said that the appeal could have implications for all ticket touts and even for ordinary motorists who passed on the benefit of an unexpired parking ticket.

These three appellants had been video-recorded obtaining Underground tickets or Travelcards, from members of the public who had passed through the ticket barriers and selling them to potential customers of London Underground.

The appellants accepted that by doing so they each committed a by-law offence but they separately pleaded guilty to theft to which they pleaded guilty after the judge ruled that all the components of theft were present, save for the question of dishonesty which was a matter for the jury.

On appeal it was argued that on the agreed facts there was no

evidence of an intention permanently to deprive. The judge had taken the view that the provisions of section 6(1) of the Theft Act 1968 covered the position and their Lordships, having considered R v Ferrandis (1996) 1 Cr App R 75, agreed that by acquiring and reselling the tickets the appellants had an intention to treat the tickets as their own to dispose of regardless of London Underground's rights.

The appellants also argued that the issuing of a ticket was analogous to the drawing of a cheque in that in each instance a chose in action was created which in the first case belonged to the customer and in the second to the purchaser.

So, by parity of reasoning with that advanced by Lord Goff of Chieveley in R v Priddy (1996) AC 815, the property belonged to the customer and not London Underground and there could have been no intention on the part of the appellants to deprive London Underground of the ticket which would in due course have been returned to the possession of London Underground.

Attractive though the submission appeared at first blush their Lordships did not think that it could possibly be correct.

On the issuing of an Underground ticket a contract was created between London Underground and the purchaser, under which each party had rights and obligations, theoretically enforceable by action.

Therefore it was arguable, their Lordships supposed, that by the transaction each party had acquired a chose in action, represented on the purchaser's side by the right to travel on the Underground system and on London Underground's side by the right to insist that the ticket was used by no one other than the purchaser.

It was common ground that the transaction constituted a transfer of an undertaking. After unsuccessful attempts to renegotiate terms the company dismissed the staff and offered them re-engagement on less favourable terms and conditions.

The employees accepted the new terms under protest and brought proceedings in an industrial tribunal claiming a declaration that they were still entitled to enjoy their old terms and conditions and seeking compensation for unfair dismissal.

The appellants had come on for hearing before Wilson and Meade had been heard by the Court of Appeal but after the appeal tribunal's judgment. The industrial tribunal had decided that the dismissals were unfair under regulation 8(1) and that the employees were entitled to continue under their original terms and conditions.

The appeal tribunal had concluded that the tribunal's decision that there had been a dismissal which was unfair and yet the old contractual terms had still continued was not logically sustainable.

Although the appeal tribunal was bound by the decision in Wilson and Meade it was the view of the very experienced lay members and of his Lordship that the Court of Appeal's decision would produce uncertainty for employees

and employers on the ground. It was the appeal tribunal's duty to spell out those difficulties.

A dismissal which was rendered unfair by regulation 8(1) had to be regarded as a nullity; but if the reason for the dismissal fell within regulation 8(2), where an economic, technical or organisational reason entailing changes in the workforce was the reason for the transfer, the dismissal would be effective.

It was likely to be the case that the employees would simply not know whether the employees had a good case under regulation 8(2). If the dismissal was a nullity, the employees remained employed and could not complain of unfair dismissal.

Employees who purportedly had been dismissed in connection with a transfer would be required to allege that their employers, the transferees, had made an unlawful deduction (non-payment) from their wages.

The transferees would then claim that the employees had been dismissed and if the employees then responded that their dismissals were unfair, they would have accepted their dismissal and turned what was otherwise an ineffective dismissal into one which took effect.

The concept of a dismissal which was a nullity seemed to the appeal

tribunal to have unsatisfactory practical consequences. The appeal tribunal also questioned whether in the light of the judgment of the House of Lords in Lister v Forth Dry Dock and Engineering Co Ltd (1990) 1 AC 540 the concept had any place in English law.

The industrial tribunal's approach to the factual issue "what was the reason for the dismissal?" could not be faulted. The question then arose as to the effect of the dismissal.

Having regard to the fact that the Court of Appeal in Wilson and Meade apparently recognised that a dismissal falling within regulation 8(1) might become effective if accepted by the employees, it seemed unreal to conclude that, despite having continued to work for the company on the new terms, the employees were still employed on the old ones.

If they had been dismissed and re-employed as was the reality in the present case, they should be awarded compensation for unfair dismissal deemed to have been unfair by virtue of regulation 8(1). The compensation would represent a once and for all payment which bought out the entitlement to the enhanced but uneconomic terms which they had previously enjoyed.

Solicitors: Stephens & Scown, Exeter; Mr Adam Crewe.

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Solicitors: Stephens & Scown, Exeter; Mr Adam Crewe.

Amending information out of time

Regina v Scantborne Justices, Ex parte M and Another

Before Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice, and Mr Justice Dyson

[Judgment February 24]

Where an information was laid within the appropriate time limit justices might, after the expiry of that limit, amend the information to charge a different offence where (i) the proposed amendment arose out of the same or substantially the same facts as gave rise to the original offence and (ii) the interests of justice favoured the amendment.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so held allowing applications for judicial review by M and C of the refusal by the Scantborne Justices to amend informations charging them with robbery to charges of theft and common assault.

The complainant, a girl of 15, alleged that the appellants, aged 14 and 15, had assaulted her, removed her trainers and thrown them into a bush. The appellants were charged with robbery, but subsequently the Crown Prosecution Service agreed to amend pleas of guilty to theft and common assault.

The justices granted an application to amend the information to allege theft but, on the clerk's objection, refused to allow an amendment to charge common assault.

Mr Christopher Kessling for the appellants.

MR JUSTICE DYSON said that the clerk's objection, accepted by the justices, was based on the following: 1 Common assault was a summary offence.

2 A magistrates' court could not try a summary offence unless the information charging it was laid within six months of commission of the alleged offence: see section 1(1) of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980.

3 The six-month period had here expired and the appellants had no power to amend to allege common assault.

His Lordship referred to R v Newcastle upon Tyne Justices, Ex parte John Byce (Contractors) Ltd (1974) 1 WLR 817 and Simpson v Roberts (The Times December 21, 1964), from which he derived the following principles: 1 The purpose of the six-month time limit under section 1(1) was to ensure that summary offences were charged and tried as soon as reasonably practicable after their alleged commission.

2 Where an information had been laid within six months it could be amended after expiry of that period.

3 An information could be amended after expiry of that period even to allege a different offence or offences, provided that (a) such offences alleged the "same mischief" as the original offence and (b) the amendment could be made in the interests of justice.

The phrase "same mischief" (see Simpson v Roberts) was not to be construed too narrowly. It meant that the new offences should arise out of the same, or substantially the same, facts as gave rise to the original offence.

Once justices were satisfied that the amended offences did so, they were to consider whether it was in the interests of justice to allow the amendment. In exercising their discretion they should pay particular regard to the interests of the defendant.

If an amendment would result in a defendant facing a significantly more serious charge that should weigh heavily, perhaps conclusively, against allowing the amendment after the six-month time limit.

There might be cases where a late application to amend would give rise to an application for an

adjournment. Were justices to conclude that such an amendment would necessitate an adjournment, that might well be a good reason, having regard to the purpose of the time limit in section 1(1), for refusing to amend.

The need for an adjournment on that ground ought, however, to be rare since the amended offence would arise out of the same or substantially the same facts as the original offence.

Applying those principles to the present cases, his Lordship considered that their Lordships' common assault arose out of the same or substantially the same facts as the original offence of robbery and that the interests of justice plainly required the amendments.

The justices had applied the wrong test. They had considered that the offences were completely different simply because robbery was a far graver charge than common assault and carried the maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

His Lordship would quash their decision and direct that they reconsider the applications in the light of the court's judgment and the Lord Chief Justice agreed.

Solicitors: William Bains, Scantborne; Pressler Parker Sloane, Scantborne.

Time limit not observed

Regina v Leeds Crown Court, Ex parte Briggs (Ronald) (No 2)

Before Lord Justice Pill and Mr Justice Gage

[Judgment March 4]

"Due expedition" for the purposes of section 2(3) of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985, required the prosecution to achieve the possibility of a committal under section 2(3) of the 1985 Act, if they served committal bundles so that the defence was in a position to consent to an uncontested committal within the custody time limit.

In reaching that decision, Judge Jones had found a conflict between the judgment of Mr Justice Jowett in R v Norwich Crown Court, Ex parte Parker (1992) 96 Cr App R 68 and that of Mr Justice Laws in R v Central Criminal Court, Ex parte Behbehani (1994) Crim LR 352 and stated that he was following the former.

Section 22 of the 1985 Act provides: "(3) The appropriate court may, at any time before the expiry of a time limit imposed by regulations, extend, or further extend, that limit if satisfied . . . (b) that the prosecution has acted with due expedition."

Mr Kris Ghedini for the applicant, Mr Guy Keart for the prosecution.

MR JUSTICE MORISON said that Cornwall County Council had owned and managed a number of care homes. Those were expensive to run.

The council was unable to negotiate terms for the staff and a scheme was devised whereby most of the homes would be transferred to a company created and financially supported by the council but which had independent charitable status.

The appellants, Cornwall County Council, had appealed from a decision of a Truro industrial tribunal last April that Mrs L. Brightman and a number of other care workers were unfairly dismissed and that the terms and conditions of their employment prior to the dismissal continued to apply on their re-engagement.

Regulation 8 provides: "(1) Where either before or after a relevant transfer, any employee of the transferee or transferee is dismissed, that employee shall be treated . . . as unfairly dismissed if the transfer or transferee was the reason or principal reason for his dismissal."

Mr Patrick Elias, QC, for the employers, Mr Jeremy McMullen, QC and Mr Damian Brown for the employees.

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Midland puts business banking back in branches

By Rodney Hobson

MIDLAND BANK has moved business banking back into the hands of the branch manager. The decision goes against the trend in banking to have business banking experts covering a cluster of branches.

Mark Bennett, Midland's head of business banking, said: "We went through the stages of splitting business banking out from personal banking, but we found that customers wanted someone they could go to see someone who belonged to the local community and knew the environment they worked in."

Mr Bennett says that Midland has invested in training more senior bank managers. Every branch now has a manager who can take decisions on business loans or, in the case of larger branches, a business specialist based at the branch.

Mr Bennett said: "We have centralised a lot of back-office functions over the past ten years. This has taken out so much of the routine procedures. Before that, we found the branch manager was getting bogged down with the operational running of the branch and was not trained and skilled in business. Now we can put in place more senior managers who have

not got to worry as much about day to day operations." Mr Bennett argues that there is now less reason for branch managers to refer requests for business loans to central decision-making. He said: "We used to have scores of regional officers, but we have done away with that arrangement. In the small minority of cases that have to be referred to a divisional centre, we have a much flatter and quicker referral procedure."

Midland is effectively trying to return to the days when a branch manager was a long-term pillar of local society. Mr Bennett, once a branch manager, believes that if managers live in a community they will have to live with their decisions.

He says that HSBC, Midland's owner, takes a longer-term view than many banks, but has not changed Midland's policy on credit risk. Giving managers more say on business loans will not lead to the taking on of more marginal cases.

Banks generally have introduced business specialists who typically cover up to six branches, either individually or in teams.

Lloyds TSB has more than 500 business centres covering its 2,000 branches. A spokesman said: "The business specialists do not stay put in the centre. They visit the customers at their own premises or see them at a local branch. Typically there are six managers at a business centre. We hope we have struck a happy medium."

NatWest says that 92 per cent of decisions on business loans are made at local or regional level. Each business manager has an individual level of discretion. If a decision is referred to higher authority, the bank will "take on board everything the local manager says".

Barclays says that although most decisions are taken locally, it has introduced greater standardisation of decision-making after experience in the recession. Business specialists from local centres attend branches.



Bennett: going against trend



Julie Kenny, of Pyronix, an electronic security equipment firm, tracks new markets



Jeremy Burgess, of GN Burgess & Co, has stacked up several Far Eastern contracts

Search on to find best of British exporters

As the extended 1998 awards loom, Rodney Hobson reports on the overseas successes of last year's winners

The search for top exporters among Britain's smaller companies begins today as last year's winners report that they have beaten the impact of the strong pound and the turmoil in Asia. The 1998 Export Awards for Smaller Business have been expanded to produce 12 regional winners. Five winners were picked on a national basis last year. Total prize money has been increased, from about £45,000 to more than £50,000 in cash and professional services. A national winner will be chosen from the regional finalists. There will also be for the first time a prize for the best newcomer in its first year of exporting.

Last year's five winners earned export income of more than £12.5 million in 1997. One winner, GN Burgess & Co, reports that overseas sales of its products — stacking chairs and folding tables — increased 6 per cent in the year to January 31.

The company, based at Feltham, Middlesex, sells to 40 countries. Jeremy Burgess, managing director, attributes the success to maintaining a high profile in countries already served and targeting new markets aggressively. He says:

"Exports have always accounted for 50-60 per cent of sales. The past couple of years have been tougher than normal but we have been out investigating new markets and have been successful because of it."

"In some instances we have had to be competitive with our pricing to offset the high value of the pound but you expect that in business. It would have been a serious mistake to reduce our export initiatives because of these difficulties."

Despite the economic turmoil in Asia, GN Burgess has broken into the Far East. It has won two lucrative contracts in China and one each in Vietnam and Indonesia. Mr Burgess says: "We won those contracts because we had done the groundwork beforehand and recognised an opportunity. When you export you have got to show you are better than the local competition. We have always been very active with trade missions, exhibitions, advertising and regular market visits."

Pyronix, a Rotherham firm making electronic security equipment, works to a five-year rolling plan to identify new markets and the products needed to make an impact. Julie Kenny, managing director, says: "We employ a full-time researcher to compile and collate as much information from as many sources as possible." These include customers, exhibitions, trade magazines and the DTI.

"We offer our customers foreign currency quotations which allow them to remain competitive when dealing with their customers. It may tighten our profit margins but our aim is to build long-term relationships."

Giltspur Scientific, a Northern Ireland company making orthopaedic shoes for cows, has broken into the US market since winning one of the export awards last year. Because American cattle are larger, shoes sold there have a slightly higher heel. Giltspur, founded by Ernie Logan, is now working on a

specialised shoe for cows grazing on Alpine slopes.

Boing, which designs children's play equipment, has seen its sales to the Middle and Far East dip over the past 12 months, mainly because of the strong pound. It has compensated by extending operations in South America.

David Taylor, managing director of the Bristol company, says: "Because of our wide range of clients and markets, we can manage if some markets dry up temporarily. We are meeting our sales targets although the sales are not always generated where we would expect them."

The fifth winner last time was Bernhard & Co of Rugby, which sells lawnmower sharpening equipment. Stephen Bernhard, managing director, says the high value of sterling has held back business in the Pacific Rim and Europe.

Even so, it has broken into China and Taiwan and expanded

in its main US market. Companies with up to 250 employees can enter for this year's awards, although past winners include firms with only a handful of staff. Giltspur Scientific had only eight on the payroll.

Companies must be able to show growth in export earnings over the past three years and a turnover in foreign sales of more than £100,000.

The awards are sponsored by the British Overseas Trade Board, Grant Thornton, Kompass British Exports, TNT Express Worldwide and Lloyds TSB Commercial Finance, with support from the CBI, The British Chambers of Commerce, the TUC and the Institute of Export.

The 12 regions are Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, East Midlands, West Midlands, East, South East, London and South West.

Application forms are available from the award administrator on fax 01342 33860 or at Kompass British Exports, Reed Business Information, Windsor Court, East Grinstead House, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 1XA.

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February winners celebrate their success

The story so far . . .

It's only March, and it's all happening. Wolves in the cup semi-finals, and the Blades in with a chance too. But that would mean two more premier league clubs out of the cup. You speak as a supporter of the game in general rather than an ITF manager there, I imagine. Quite so — but also as an ITF manager without any Leeds players in his team any more. I seem to remember that you've had quite a few Leeds players at different times. Always at the wrong times, unfortunately. Molenaar, Wetherall, Wallace — I've signed them all, usually just before their worst games of the season. I learnt from my mistakes. And then, by the sound of it. As long as you learn something, my ancestral loyalties count for nothing now. A good thing too. There's no room for sentiment in football. So you're unaffected by the demise of Leeds: did you come out of the weekend well in general? Not too badly, I've got a couple of players from Hears now; they're right up there in the Scottish league, and they've gone through to the semi-finals of the Scottish cup. Possibilities of a double there, although Celtic and Rangers are probably thinking the same thing. South of the border? West Ham live to fight another day, although another day fighting Arsenal might not be a good thing. They've played one another umpteen times this season, and the Hammers haven't won yet. Plus things often get a bit tasty when players play each other a lot — witness that little centre-circle fracas on the final whistle. Worried about red cards? There is a risk. The non-appearance of your key players in vital games is a big problem when you haven't got many transfers left to play with. The non-appearance of some teams, too. Absolutely. After what seems to be a long time without a game, Leicester will finally be playing again next week, so I might get some points from my man Muzzy, if he isn't suspended. Oh yes, Muzzy Izet, your man at Filbert Street. I must say, this is all very nostalgic. Molenaar, Izet, all these names from your past. Whatever happened to Celestine Babayaro, by the way? He was one of yours, wasn't he? Injured, I'm afraid, but I'm sure he'll be back for Nigeria in the World Cup. Not much good to you, is it? That's all you know. He's already pencilled in for my ITF World Cup team.

The £1,000 prize for February has gone to a proven ITF expert, while the women's league winner is a Liverpool fan from Aldershot

Being based in Aldershot, Corporal Michelle Nicol finds it difficult to see enough of Liverpool, her favourite team; but, as the winner of the ITF women's league for the month of February, she receives two tickets to the premier league game of her choice in addition to a sports bag and a signed football, and it is safe to say that the reds will feature. She has followed the Anfield team for three years. "My husband Ian is well into football and that's how I started getting interested," Mrs Nicol said, readily acknowledging his influence, particularly in her extensive use of Scotland-based players in her team, Michelle's Men. "Ian is Scottish — a Hibs fan, which says it all, really — and I got the knowledge of Scottish football from him. But he's also a long-standing supporter of Liverpool, which went down well in Edinburgh."

Once Mrs Nicol, who plays a bit of football herself when duties permit, got to grips with the format of ITF, there was no stopping her. "I just went for it in February," she said — so much so that she has used up all but one of the 80 transfers she had available. "I was after winning a monthly prize rather than the league. Obviously in February there were a lot of games. I started off with players I knew, then team form and



Michelle Nicol, women's league winner for February, receives her award from Jason Dodd, the Southampton defender

ers, is looking to the future. "Now I fully understand the rules, I'll be ready for next season," she said. Jon Prego of Nottinghamshire is one man who clearly has no difficulty understanding the rules, having won the main league prize for the third month in succession. Like Susan Malkin, the internet monthly winner, he receives £1,000 in addition to the match tickets and sports equipment. The latter also go to G. Richards, of Filton, Bristol, and Kevin Mulhearn, of Lerwick, the youth and students' league winners.



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WOMEN'S LEAGUE
Monthly prize of membership tickets, signed football and sports bag

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

1	S Whitfield	898
2	J Gardner	869
3	B Fletcher	849
4	A Finch	847
5	C Purdy	845
6	A Havershaw	845
7	S Brooks	845
8	L Emery	824
9	J Pappas	823
10	Adachi	821
11	C Ruiz-Guimaraes	817
12	M Hussein	811
13	C Chesire	802
14	J Woolner	789
15	M Portwood	789
16	M Nicol	794
17	P Johnston	780
18	C Purdy	787
19	S Alport	777
20	S Reader	772

STUDENTS' LEAGUE

1	N Wheatley	935
2	T Gardner	907
3	Mr N Wheatley	868
4	G Wilson	848
5	J Gardner	845
6	Steven Shipley	815
7	E Carmichael	811
8	F Ferguson	769
9	J Windsett	767
10	M Slade	758
11	K Wade	748
12	C Marlaniczak	748
13	J Frost	745
14	I McGill	741
15	W Rozzak	735
16	N Wheatley	735
17	Z Tezer	738
18	T Sharples	727
19	G Shington	728
20	M Baker	725

YOUTH LEAGUE

1	M Somapala	914
2	D Lewis	880
3	R Wicks	869
4	J Gardner	865
5	C Oyston	862
6	M Phillips	851
7	O Ledgard	838
8	M Roberts	813
9	J Laurence	800
10	G Richards	798
11	N Brotherton	771
12	C Marlaniczak	769
13	K Tindall	762
14	E Swinley	751
15	S Mower	745
16	A Simpson	734
17	B McMillan	733
18	N McGuinness	723
19	J Brady	725
20	G Colerbank	722

ITF LEAGUE

1	A Luckhurst	1032
2	S Legg	1029
3	Mr M Jones	1020
4	Mike Madden	1020
5	Mr M Jones	1018
6	A Luckhurst	1018
7	A Luckhurst	1014
8	A Luckhurst	1014
9	P Turner	1011
10	D Shuter	1008
11	P Turner	1008
12	Mr P Turner	1002
13	Mary Ann Kennedy	992
14	T Turner	987
15	A Luckhurst	981
16	Mary Ann Kennedy	978
17	Malcolm Jackson	978
18	Marfa Papa e la Bacon	974
19	P Turner	972
20	Mr D Birch	971
21	Mr M Jones	971
22	P Bown	970
23	D Walton	967
24	Chris Forde	967
25	P Bown	966
26	G Dolan	965
27	P Turner	965
28	T Turner	965
29	Susan Malkin	962
30	P Turner	962
31	N Wheatley	958
32	T Turner	958
33	G Price	951
34	C Burr	951
35	Jeremy Dwyer	951
36	Hunt	951
37	N Bennett	948
38	D Brown	944
39	Mr D Patel	944
40	P Rees	940
41	A Luckhurst	939
42	Graeme Dabnor	938
43	Headley	934
44	Tim Oldfield	934
45	J Hunt	934
46	J Luckhurst	934
47	Mary Ann Kennedy	933
48	Mike Madden	930
49	Mr D Patel	930
50	D Parson	929
51	J Hunt	929
52	B Bore	929
53	B Bore	929
54	M Lindquist	928
55	Henry Wheeler	928
56	R Lockyer	928
57	P Turner	928
58	Mr D Patel	924
59	G Rainbow	922
60	P Bown	922
61	F Fazalarby	922
62	Andy Robson	922
63	Chris Forde	922
64	AJ Hastings	919
65	Andrew Bates	919
66	S Brichfield	918
67	James Tan	918
68	DM Carter	917
69	T Gardner	916
70	Drusby	914
71	Bellou	913
72	Graeme Dabnor	913
73	I Balch	912
74	Mike Allison	910
75	D Shuter	909
76	T Gardner	908
77	Michael Hosen	908
78	Kiran R Patel	908
79	D Shuter	908
80	W Clark	904
81	Mr A Staszkiewicz	903
82	Michael Hosten	903
83	Mr N Wheatley	902
84	Ian Kilip	902
85	P Turner	902
86	John Hunt	901
87	J Murray	899
88	Mr A Staszkiewicz	899
89	Mr M Jones	897
90	M Fox	897
91	K Fehall	897
92	V Cox	897
93	J Worthington	897
94	Mr D Edrocks Staher	897
95	Graeme Dabnor	896
96	I Clayton	896
97	R Yates	896
98	P Turner	896
99	S Gell	891
100	M Woodley	890

PFA PLAYERS' LEAGUE

1	Steve Potts	594
2	Paul Singleton	592
3	Simon Gesson	551
4	Jonathan Hunt	544
5	Rob Savage	537
6	John Snelton	521
7	John Snelton	517
8	Robert Lee	515
9	Richard Shaw	510
10	John Snelton	509
11	Egon Kereme	497
12	Nigel Martin	485
13	Teddy Shephard	484
14	Phil Bebb	484
15	Patrick Berger	484
16	Steve Lewis	484
17	David Baily	484
18	Dean Blackwell	484
19	John Snelton	484
20	Dave Watson	481
21	Paul Williams	477
22	Nicky Salt	476
23	Chris Powell	475
24	David Searson	472
25	Andy Townsend	461
26	John Snelton	461
27	Law Dixon	458
28	Tim Brooker	452
29	Kevin Cunningham	451
30	Andrew Liddell	448
31	Ian Pearce	440
32	John Snelton	437
33	David Beckham	431
34	Dean Holdsworth	431
35	John Snelton	428
36	Roger Cross	428
37	Robbie Van Der Laan	428
38	John Snelton	428
39	Frank Leake	428
40	Ugo Etogho	416
41	David Wetherall	416
42	John Snelton	416
43	George Le Saux	411
44	Darren Fletcher	411
45	Nicky Eichen	411
46	Richard Johnson	408
47	Andy Roberts	408
48	Lars Robinson	408
49	Gary Malbut	408
50	Kevin Hitchcock	403
51	Steve Lewis	403
52	Steve Clarke	398
53	Ned Redburn	398
54	Jason East	398
55	Dennis Wise	398
56	Iain Dowie	398
57	Pauline Keanerick	398
58	Spencer Prior	379
59	Denny Williamson	374
60	Kevin Southgate	372
61	Andy Sinton	371
62	Robbie Cross	371
63	Shawee Castledice	367
64	Colin Calkinwood	365
65	John Hetheron	365
66	Mark Wright	355
67	Alan Wright	355
68	Chris Forde	341
69	Lee Carlsley	338
70	Marc Edworthy	329
71	Andrew Bates	318
72	Glennisco Zola	299
73	Alan Shearer	288
74	Alan Shearer	288
75	Mike Whitlow	201

INTERNET LEAGUE

1	Mike Madden	1020
2	Mary Ann Kennedy	992
3	Mr M Jones	974
4	Barba Papa e la Bacon	974
5	P Bown	970
6	Chris Forde	967
7	Susan Malkin	954
8	Jeremy Dwyer	951
9	Graeme Dabnor	939
10	Tim Claxton	935
11	Mary Ann Kennedy	934
12	Mike Madden	930
13	Henry Wheeler	924
14	Andy Robson	921
15	Chris Forde	920
16	Andrew Bates	918
17	James Tan	918
18	Bellou	914
19	Graeme Dabnor	913
20	Mike Allison	910

FA CUP LEAGUE

1	Mr M Jones	280
2	Mr M Jones	278
3	Mr P Turner	266
4	Susan Malkin	263
5	Mr P Turner	263
6	Jon Prego	262
7	Mr P Turner	254
8	J Hunt	248
9	Susan Malkin	246
10	H & S Management	246
11	Mrs A Staszkiewicz	246
12	K Fehall	245
13	G Dolan	244
14	Mr K Ledby	244
15	Alexander Kennedy	243
16	Susan Malkin	243
17	P Turner	242
18	Mr P Turner	241
19	I Ralph	235
20	C Burr	225

TICKET OFFER THE TIMES

Exclusive World Cup ticket offer

Today *The Times* offers readers the chance to see England's first game in the World Cup, against Tunisia, on June 15. Prices are per person flying on a private charter and returning the same day.

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CHANGING TIMES

NEWS SPORT WHAT'S ON FUN MONEY KNOWLEDGE SHOPPING

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Updated scores for FA Cup and main leagues

The elimination of premier league teams from the cups has left ITF entrants with some tricky decisions

There was good news and bad news for ITF entrants in the cup games played over the weekend. The good news came in the form of replays for Arsenal, West Ham and Coventry City, offering a further opportunity for points scoring for competitors whose selections include players or managers from those teams.

The bad news for those in contention for the ITF FA Cup League was the elimination of Leeds United and St Johnstone by first division sides Wolves and Falkirk. It was especially ironic that Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink, featured on these pages a week ago as one of the top points scorers among players remaining in the FA Cup, should have failed to convert the last-minute penalty that would have sent his team into a replay at Molineux. Cup exit, defeat, and the deduction of a point for missing a penalty — a bad day at the office. It was fortunate that the referee did not appear to notice the incident which followed the penalty and could also have resulted in a dismissal (minus three more points).

At the moment, depending on the outcome of the Sheffield United versus Coventry replay and last night's Rangers v Dundee game, there could still be six premier league teams involved in the semi-finals, which enables anyone with

David Weir, perhaps? Or John Robertson and Gilles Rousset? In all probability it will not come to that, and Dion, Marco, Henrik and company will take the opportunity to contribute a few more points to the totals of those who have stood by them over the season: do not forget that FA Cup points also count towards a player's overall score. Marco Negret, after all, remains the top-scoring outfield player (although recently overtaken by Peter Schmeichel overall). Dion Dublin did score Coventry's goal on Saturday even if his missed tackle allowed Sheffield United their equaliser, and Henrik Eriksson's late, low cross was turned into his own net by Erik Pedersen.

Nevertheless, entrants with only a few transfers, or none at all, especially those with eyes on the FA Cup prize, need to consider their choices very carefully. By next Wednesday, either West Ham United or Arsenal will be concentrating on the league, and the FA Cup future of Coventry will have been decided. Before then, Arsenal will have played Manchester United at Old Trafford. Those with confidence in the Gunners may feel that Bergkamp or Overmars would be useful acquisitions.

NICK SZCZEPANIK



Dion Dublin, right, celebrates his penalty against Sheffield United on Saturday

THIS WEEK'S MOVES

There are no transfers in ITF this week

HOW TO MAKE A TRANSFER

- YOU MAY** transfer as and when you wish according to your team transfer allowance. If a player or manager moves teams during the season, it may affect the composition of your team. You may adjust your team by using the transfer system to avoid missing out on points.
- EACH TEAM** that was entered at the start of the season was allocated 60 transfers for the season and each team registering after that date had its number of transfers reduced by three per week up to December 13. Teams registered before that date were allocated an extra 20 transfers. Teams registered since then and from now on will be allocated 20 transfers for the rest of the season.
- THE LINE** is open now and will remain open for the rest of the season. You may only make transfers by using a Touch-Tone (DTMF) telephone (most push-button telephones with a * and a hash key are Touch-Tone). You will need ten digits for your PIN which you will have to tap in (not speak). Follow the simple instructions and tap in the five-digit codes of the players that you are transferring.
- YOU MAY** make up to four transfers per call but may make as many calls as you wish to achieve the required amount of transfers.
- TRANSFERS** made before 12 noon on any day will become effective for matches starting after that time. Transfers made after 12 noon will become effective for matches starting after 12 noon the following day.
- YOUR NEW** player only starts to score points for you when his transfer is registered. The current score of the player transferred out remains part of your team score but he then ceases to score for you.
- CALLS COST** 50p per minute and calls from a telephone box cost approximately twice as much.

Transfer number: 0891 884 628.
Outside the UK: +44 990 200 538.

Code	Name	Team	S	FA	FA	Leg	Tot
10101	J Leighton	Aberdeen	1.50	0	2	0	30
10201	D Seaman	Arsenal	5.00	0	13	0	70
10301	M Bosnich	Aston Villa	3.00	0	18	8	72
10401	D Watson	Barnsley	1.00	-6	11	-5	-17
10501	T Flowers	Blackburn	4.00	0	9	0	55
10601	K Branagan	Bolton	1.50	0	0	0	39
10701	S Kerr	Celtic	4.00	0	0	0	0
10702	J Gould	Celtic	4.00	-2	9	-2	86
10801	E De Goey	Chelsea	3.00	0	-9	-2	66
10901	S Ozgrizovic	Coventry City	1.50	2	2	2	19
11001	C Neal	C Palace	0.25	0	0	0	0
11002	K Miller	C Palace	2.00	0	23	0	48
11101	M Poom	Derby County	2.50	0	8	0	81
11201	S Dykstra	Dundee Utd	2.00	-5	6	-3	-31
11301	I Westwater	Dunfermline	1.00	0	-2	-3	-3
11401	N Southall	Everton	2.00	0	0	0	3
11402	T Myhre	Everton	2.00	0	0	0	3
11501	G Rousset	Harts	3.50	3	17	3	57
11601	C Reid	Hibernian	1.50	0	0	-8	-8
11602	O Gottalikkson	Hibernian	1.50	0	0	-1	-1
11702	G Marshall	Kilmarnock	1.50	0	-1	0	-1
11801	N Marlyn	Leeds Utd	3.50	2	13	10	99
11901	K Keir	Leicester City	3.00	0	3	0	70
12001	D James	Liverpool	4.00	0	-5	0	177
12101	P Schmeichel	Man Utd	5.00	0	0	0	0
12201	S Howie	Motherwell	1.00	0	0	0	0
12301	S Owen	Newcastle	3.00	3	11	3	39
12401	A Goran	Rangers	5.00	0	8	0	52
12501	N Pressman	Sheffield Wed	2.00	0	5	8	19
12702	P Jones	Southampton	2.00	0	0	4	44
12801	A Main	St Johnstone	0.50	-5	6	-5	27
12901	I Walker	Tottenham	2.50	0	3	0	52
12901	L Muldusko	West Ham	2.00	0	0	0	4
13001	N Stillivan	Wimbledon	2.50	0	16	0	82

Code	Name	Team	S	FA	FA	Leg	Tot
30101	B O'Neil	Aberdeen	2.00	0	-1	0	0
30201	T Adams	Arsenal	3.00	0	2	4	32
30202	M Keown	Arsenal	3.00	0	5	4	16
30203	G Grimandi	Arsenal	2.00	0	10	0	39
30204	S Bout	Arsenal	3.00	0	7	0	27
30301	G Southgate	Aston Villa	3.00	0	4	5	24
30302	U Eholuo	Aston Villa	3.00	0	7	5	34
30401	A De Zeeuw	Barnsley	1.00	-1	4	-1	-14
30402	A Miaser	Barnsley	0.50	-4	2	-19	-19
30403	M Appleby	Barnsley	0.50	0	1	0	-9
30502	C Hendry	Blackburn	3.00	0	4	0	40
30504	S Henchoz	Blackburn	3.00	0	3	0	32
30505	T Pedersen	Blackburn	2.00	0	0	0	2
30601	G Taggart	Bolton	1.50	0	0	0	5
30602	G Bergesson	Bolton	1.00	0	0	-2	-17
30704	C Falclough	Bolton	1.00	0	0	-1	-11
30704	M Fish	Bolton	1.50	0	0	0	0
30701	E Annoni	Celtic	1.50	0	1	0	20
30702	M MacKay	Celtic	3.00	0	0	0	3
30703	A Stubbs	Celtic	3.00	0	5	0	64
30704	M Fisher	Celtic	3.00	0	8	0	54
30801	F Leboeuf	Chelsea	3.00	0	-5	0	34
30802	M Duberry	Chelsea	3.00	0	-4	0	19
30803	S Clarke	Chelsea	2.50	0	-4	0	12
30804	B Lambourde	Chelsea	2.50	0	0	0	-3
30901	L Doherty	Coventry City	1.50	0	0	0	0
30902	R Shaw	Coventry City	1.50	0	8	0	25
30903	P Williams	Coventry City	1.50	0	0	0	-11
31001	A Roberts	C Palace	1.50	0	15	0	0
31002	A Lingham	C Palace	0.75	0	0	0	0
31003	M Heston	C Palace	0.25	0	0	0	0
31004	H Hreidarsson	C Palace	1.00	0	13	0	2
31101	I Sillanpaa	Derby County	2.50	0	4	0	34
31102	J Laurson	Derby County	1.50	0	-1	0	24
31201	S Pressley	Dundee Utd	2.00	0	3	0	19
31301	G Shields	Dunfermline	1.50	0	-1	0	-10
31401	S Bilic	Everton	1.50	0	0	-3	-18
31402	D Watson	Everton	1.50	0	0	-1	-10
31404	C Tiler	Everton	1.50	0	2	16	16
31501	D Weir	Hibernian	2.00	0	0	0	-11
31601	J Hughes	Hibernian	2.00	0	0	0	-11
31802	G Hall	Leeds Utd	2.00	0	5	5	28
31803	R Mclennan	Leeds Utd	2.00	0	14	5	33
31804	L Radaba	Leeds Utd	2.00	0	9	0	27
31901	M Elliott	Leicester City	3.50	0	3	0	59
31902	P Kanamark	Leicester City	2.00	0	3	0	52
31903	S Walsh	Leicester City	2.50	0	-2	0	32
31904	S Prior	Leicester City	2.00	0	5	0	21
32001	A Wright	Liverpool	3.00	0	-2	1	36
32002	C Meece	Liverpool	3.00	0	-2	1	36
32003	B Kvarnstrom	Liverpool	3.00	0	-1	0	29
32004	P Babbs	Liverpool	3.00	0	0	0	-2
32001	H Berg	Man Utd	3.50	0	1	-1	44
32101	D May	Man Utd	3.50	0	-3	-2	-5
32102	G Paillister	Man Utd	3.50	0	-4	0	51
32301	P Albert	Newcastle	2.50	1	2	1	15
32302	D Peacock	Newcastle	2.00	0	10	0	10
32303	C Hovvey	Newcastle	2.00	0	6	0	16
32304	A Piatek	Newcastle	3.00	0	8	0	23
32401	S Portini	Rangers	3.50	0	-1	0	43
32402	J Bjorklund	Rangers	3.50	0	4	0	40
32403	L Amoruso	Rangers	3.50	0	0	0	0
32404	R Gough	Rangers	4.00	0	6	0	14
32501	D Walker	Sheffield Wed	2.00	0	3	5	11
32502	J Newson	Sheffield Wed	2.00	0	0	0	0
32503	P Abbott	Sheffield Wed	2.00	0	3	9	19
32701	R Dryden	Southampton	1.00	0	0	0	8
32702	C Lundekvam	Southampton	1.50	0	0	1	17
32704	K Monkou	Southampton	1.50	0	-1	-3	-12
32801	S McClauskay	St Johnstone	0.50	0	0	0	10
32802	S Campbell	Tottenham	2.00	0	3	0	18
32802	J Scoules	Tottenham	1.50	0	2	0	7
32803	R Vega	Tottenham	1.50	0	0	0	1
32804	C Calderwood	Tottenham	1.50	0	4	0	21
32901	R Fardland	West Ham	2.50	0	1	0	16
32902	R Hall	West Ham	2.00	0	0	0	0
31403	D Unsworth	West Ham	2.00	0	2	4	20
32903	S Potts	West Ham	1.50	0	0	0	9
32904	I Pearce	West Ham	2.00	3	5	7	18
33001	C Perry	Wimbledon	2.50	0	8	0	29
33002	D Blackwell	Wimbledon	2.50	0	3	0	25

Code	Name	Team	S	FA	FA	Leg	Tot
40605	J Pollock	Bolton	2.00	0	1	0	37
40702	P O'Donnell	Celtic	3.00	0	0	0	12
42503	R Binkler	Celtic	3.00	0	2	0	24
40704	C Burley	Celtic	4.00	1	6	1	75
40705	P Lambert	Celtic	3.00	1	6	1	41
40801	D Wise	Chelsea	3.50	0	0	0	38
40801	R Di Matteo	Chelsea	4.00	0	0	0	42
40803	M Newton	Chelsea	1.50	0	0	1	14
40804	G Poyet	Chelsea	3.00	0	0	0	28
40901	G McAllister	Coventry City	2.50	0	0	0	20
40902	T Softvold	Coventry City	1.50	0	5	0	41
40903	J Selako	Coventry City	1.50	0	0	0	15
40904	P Telfer	Coventry City	1.50	1	8	1	32
41005	G Boateng	Coventry City	1.50	0	2	0	10
41002	S Rodger	C Palace	1.00	0	6	0	34
41003	D Pfitzer	C Palace	0.25	0	0	0	0
41004	P Warhurst	C Palace	1.50	0	3	0	34
41005	A Lombardo	C Palace	3.00	0	0	0	22
41102	S Eranio	Derby County	3.50	0	1	0	38
41103	D Powell	Derby County	1.50	0	3	0	20
41104	C Dally	Derby County	1.50	0	0	0	25
41105	R Van Der Laken	Derby County	1.00	0	0	0	8
41106	J Hunt	Derby County	1.00	0	0	0	17
41201	R Winters	Dunfermline	3.50	1	9	1	82
41301	A Smith	Dunfermline	3.50	0	27	7	90
41402	J Parkin	Everton	1.50	0	1	0	21
41403	G Farnley	Everton	2.00	0	0	0	19
41404	D Williamson	Everton	2.00	0	0	0	19
41405	J Oster	Everton	2.50	0	-1	1	8
41406	D Hutchison	Everton	2.00	0	0	-1	-1
41501	N McCann	Harts	3.50	2	7	2	77
41601	C Jackson	Hibernian	2.00	1	1	0	12
41602	B Lavety	Hibernian	2.00	0	0	0	28
41701	J McIntyre	Kilmarnock	2.00	0	0	0	5
41801	D Hopkins	Leeds Utd	3.00	0	2	3	39
41801	L Sweeney	Leeds Utd	3.00	0	0	0	29
41802	A Headland	Leeds Utd	3.00	1	2	1	36
41803	L Sharpe	Leeds Utd	2.50	0	0	0	0
41804	B Ribero	Leeds Utd	2.50	0	4	0	24
41901	G Parker	Leicester City	2.00	0	7	0	32
41902	N Lennon	Leicester City	2.00	0	3	0	51
41903	M Izzet	Leicester City	2.00	0	2	0	55
41904	S Taylor	Leicester City	1.50	0	0	0	0
41905	S McManaman	Liverpool	6.00	1	2	0	77
42002	C Lechwardson	Liverpool	3.00	0	0	0	14
42003	M Thomas	Liverpool	3.00	0	0	0	14
42004	J Redknapp	Liverpool	3.00	0	4	1	43
42102	P Ince	Liverpool	4.00	0	0	5	46
42101	D Beckham	Man Utd	8.00	0	12	1	81
42102	R Giggs	Man					

NEWS

Vendetta against me says Prescott

John Prescott claimed last night that he was the victim of a "concerted and shadowy" campaign to undermine him in his Hull constituency.

The Deputy Prime Minister told *The Times*: "I do not know who it is or why they are doing it. But for the last few months, people have been trying to blacken my name, and it is time to say something about it. It is a vendetta"..... Page 1

McAliskey wins extradition fight

Roisin McAliskey, the terrorist suspect, won her 15-month fight against extradition to Germany on IRA bombing charges. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, ruled that Ms McAliskey, who is suffering from post-natal depression, should not be sent to Germany because the extradition would be "unjust and oppressive"..... Page 1

Woodward case

Louise Woodward may have to face full trial over the death of eight-month-old Matthew Eappen - and if she does, her defence lawyers are prepared to ask for the baby's body to be exhumed..... Page 1

Driver killed seven

An alcoholic who killed three members of a family as he drove with a bottle of vodka in his hand was jailed for seven years Page 7

Death damages

People who suffer mental illness after witnessing or hearing of a relative's death should be able to claim damages, the Government's law reform body says..... Page 8

Russian embargo

Russia joined its Western partners in denouncing Serbia's repression in Kosovo and by imposing a weapons embargo..... Pages 1, 12

Prince's operation

The Prince of Wales was admitted to hospital for keyhole surgery to correct damage to his right knee. He was discharged after a few hours..... Page 1

Fathers' rights

Unmarried fathers could be given the same rights of parental responsibility as married men. The move comes after protests from men who discover they have few rights over their child..... Page 2

Fighting back

Beverly Hammett, severely disfigured after a hitman mistakenly threw nitric acid in her face, is determined not to let the injuries ruin her life..... Page 3

'Mad cow' evidence

The public inquiry into BSE is to be extended by six months at the request of the presiding judge because of the growing mountain of evidence that his committee will have to scale..... Page 6

Not amused

The Teletubbies were under attack from international broadcasters at a London conference for being superficial, non-educational, too commercial and altogether too cheerful..... Page 9

Wives in action

Germany's political leading ladies are preparing for the first time in postwar history to enter the election fray..... Page 11

Stranger than fiction

An angry woman threatened to sue President Clinton for denying having an affair with her. She said his action was damaging to sales of her novel, a thinly disguised account of the alleged affair..... Page 13

Nationalists hope

Right-wing Hindu nationalists are within striking distance of forming a coalition government in India, taking the world's second most populous country into uncharted waters..... Page 15

High Street label for the Royal Opera

A shopping trip to Marks & Spencer brought the Royal Opera House a little closer to becoming the people's opera. They had wanted their singers to be dressed by Giorgio Armani. Instead they went to the store's Marble Arch branch in search of outfits for nine singers in a revival of a modern-dress version *Così fan tutte*..... Page 5



Roads were closed on the French Indian Ocean island of Reunion when a 8,700ft volcano erupted after being dormant for six years

BUSINESS

Economy: High Street sales slowed significantly in February, confirming the suspicion that January's sales were the result of discounts rather than a display of consumer confidence..... Page 27

Merger off: Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publisher, has abandoned a £1.75 billion merger with publishers, Walters Kluwer Page 27

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THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,735

- ACROSS**
- 1 Firm with little money and evidence of debt in profusion (7).
 - 5 Disposal of litter, including second tiny dog (5,2).
 - 9 Late entertainment centre near Main Street rejected (9).
 - 10 Slip's dismay, drooping opener (5).
 - 11 Tip of the tongue in short (5).
 - 12 One who jogs without a rest (9).
 - 14 Travelling mostly without hardship, showing tenacity (1,4).
 - 17 Celebrate lavishly to get cruise under way? (4,3,4,3).
 - 21 Awful display of greed at an outdoor restaurant (5,6).
 - 23 Writer using nibs with pen, but not initially (5).
 - 24 Pick a particular size of type (5).
 - 25 Not willing to declare after baiting with only half of team (9).
- DOWN**
- 26 Daily gin in a warm nook (7).
 - 27 Left interrupted by Conservative full of passion (7).
 - 1 King using corporal punishment to contain rising workers (6).
 - 2 Old equipment mounted in secure framework to produce crude metal (3-4).
 - 3 In line of succession to throne when restored? Exactly! (2,3,4).
 - 4 Marvellous kind of patient with nurse in support to oversee operations (11).
 - 5 Be on the bench, following second appeal (5).
 - 6 Fragrant resin, note, in tree I found (5).
 - 7 Precious stone acquired by means of one dowry (7).
 - 8 Openings admitting beam for projection of pictures (5).
 - 13 Tension developed when housed in friend's dwelling (11).
 - 15 Next crisis almost breaking? It's coming from outside (9).
 - 16 Become more unobtrusive and innocent (5).
 - 18 Like an author, quiet as a bird (7).
 - 19 Cocky newcomer riding over jump (7).
 - 20 Go straight and become sociable (6).
 - 22 Eastern ruler making a simple pronouncement (5).
 - 25 Dennon driving up motorway and parking at the end (3).
- Solution to Puzzle No 20734**
- TASKMASTER BEAM
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BRAINPOWER LASS
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FURY EXPATRIATE
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R O L Y P O A P P E A L
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HOURS OF DARKNESS

Sun rises: 5:27 am Sun sets: 5:56 pm
Moon sets: 5:15 am Moon rises: 3:18 pm
Full moon March 13
London 5:56 pm to 6:24 am
Bristol 6:05 pm to 6:34 am
Edinburgh 6:06 pm to 6:34 am
Manchester 6:03 pm to 6:34 am
Perthshire 6:10 pm to 6:42 am

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up
41.4% of the new material for
UK newspapers in the first
half of 1997

General: Scotland wet and windy with rain falling as snow over peaks. N Ireland wet in morning, brighter in afternoon with a few lousy showers. Wales, northern and western England clearing bright but cloud quickly thickening with wind and rain setting in. Rain may bring renewed flooding in Wales. Southeast England and East Angles starting cold, rain arriving by afternoon. Tonight becoming much colder from northwest. Snow in Scotland. Rain, sleet and snow spreading southeast later with rain-falls northwards in places.

London, SE England, E Angles, E England: early frost followed by hazy sunshine. Rain arriving in afternoon. Wind freshening S. Max temp: 10C (50F).

Central S and Central N England, E and W Midlands, Channel Is, NE England: some early sun, rain by lunchtime. Wind strengthening S. Max 9C (48F).

SW England, S and N Wales, NW England, Leicestershire, Isle of Man: soon becoming very wet. Bright spells and showers by late afternoon. Wind strong S. Max 10C (50F).

London, SE England, E Angles, E England, SE Scotland, NE Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: heavy rain spreading from west with snow on mountains. Wind strong S to SW. Max 9C (48F).

SW Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, Argyll, NW Scotland: cloudy with rain and snow on hills. Showery in afternoon. Wind strong to gale S, easing later. Max 9C (48F).

N Ireland: wet and windy start, soon brightening with sun and hills. Showery in afternoon. Wind strong to gale SW. Max 10C (50F).

Irish Republic: wet and windy start, showery by midday. Wind fresh or strong S, becoming SW. Max 11C (52F).

Ireland, SE: cold and blustery with sunny spells and wintery showers.



Changes to chart below from noon: high A will move southeast and decline; low A is expected to move northeast with little change; low W will persist over east Mediterranean

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FORECAST

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Precip
London	12-15	10-12	Partly cloudy	0.5
Edinburgh	10-12	8-10	Cloudy	1.0
Birmingham	11-14	9-11	Light rain	1.5
Manchester	10-13	8-10	Cloudy	1.0
Cardiff	11-14	9-11	Light rain	1.5
Belfast	10-12	8-10	Cloudy	1.0
Sheffield	11-14	9-11	Light rain	1.5
Nottingham	11-14	9-11	Light rain	1.5
Leeds	11-14	9-11	Light rain	1.5
Coventry	11-14	9-11	Light rain	1.5
Exeter	11-14	9-11	Light rain	1.5
Bristol	11-14	9-11	Light rain	1.5
Birmingham	11-14	9-11	Light rain	1.5
London	11-14	9-11	Light rain	1.5
Cardiff	11-14	9-11	Light rain	1.5
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Bristol	11-14	9-11	Light rain	1.5
Birmingham	11-14	9-11	Light rain	1.5
London	11-14	9-11	Light rain</	

THE TIMES

2

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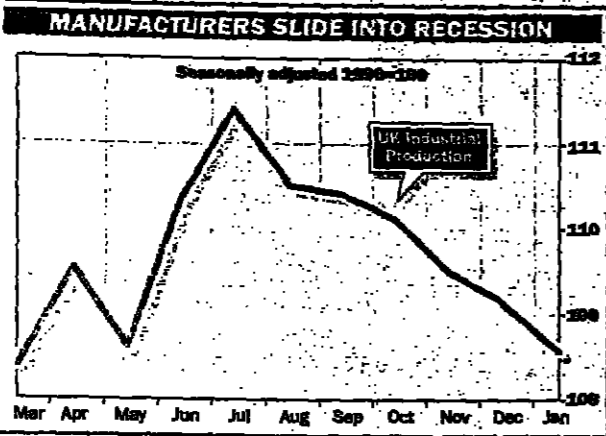
Woodward makes players choose club or country
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patricia Wheatecroft

TUESDAY MARCH 10 1998

Sales slow down as industrial recession looms



By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

HIGH STREET sales slowed down significantly in February, confirming the suspicion that January's bumper sales were the result of steep discounts rather than a display of consumer confidence. The British Retail Consortium's latest sales monitor today shows that the value of retail sales rose 3.4 per cent last month, against a 6.1 per cent increase in January and growth of 4.8 per cent in December.

Together with yesterday's figures showing that manufacturing is very close to falling into recession and another set of subdued industrial costs and prices figures, the City and

business said that the latest snapshot of the high street vindicated last week's decision by the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) not to raise interest rates.

Andrew Higginson, Chairman of the BRC economic affairs committee, said that customers had evidently shopped in January during the sales rather than paying full prices in February. He said that many homeowners whose mortgages are reviewed annually faced a steep rise in repayments in January after five rate rises last year. This may have depressed spending.

Sales for the three months to February grew 4.7 per cent, against a rise of 4 per cent in the three months to January. However, the BRC said that

this did not indicate an acceleration in activity but reflected the fact that a very weak figure in November fell out of the three-month comparisons.

The Office for National Statistics yesterday reported that industrial output, which includes the energy sector and the output of utilities, fell 0.6 per cent in February against City expectations of a 0.2 per cent rise. Manufacturing, forecast to rise a little, showed no growth at all in February. Both industrial production and manufacturing will have to show much improvement in February and March to avoid the sectors registering a recession, usually measured as two consecutive quarters of contraction. Most forecasters do not believe that industry is likely

to rebound: the pound remains strong and lower demand and price competition from Asia has put exporters under more pressure.

The ONS also reported another set of benign producer prices figures as the strong pound continued to bear down on import costs. In February, input prices fell 0.2 per cent, leaving the year-on-year rate at minus 9.5 per cent. Output prices were flat, though without food, drink, tobacco and petroleum the underlying picture shows a rise of just 0.4 per cent. Jonathan Loynes, of HSBC Markets, noted that, barring revisions, this could be the lowest rate for 30 years.

Commentary, page 29

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET

FTSE 100	2708.00 (+36.0)
FTSE All share	2708.00 (+14.22)
Nikkei	16972.50 (-158.44)
Dow Jones	8918.46 (+49.07)
S&P Composite	1058.06 (+2.37)

FEDERAL FUNDS: 5 1/8% (5 7/8%)
LONG BOND: 102 1/2% (101 1/2%)
YIELD: 5.85% (6.02%)

3-mth Interbank: 7 1/4% (7 1/4%)
Life long gilt: 107 1/2% (107 1/2%)

New York: \$ 1.6380* (1.6370)
London: 1.6386 (1.6372)
DM: 2.9900 (2.9885)
FF: 10.0280 (10.0250)
Sfr: 2.4550* (2.4418)
Yen: 209.04 (209.30)
E index: 106.1 (105.4)

London close: \$294.76 (\$294.25)
* denotes midday trading price

Halifax tops RBS's bid for society

By RICHARD MILLS, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

HALIFAX has trumped Royal Bank of Scotland's agreed £650 million takeover of Birmingham Midshires Building Society by offering around a 25 per cent premium on the price and guaranteeing that it would be no compulsory redundancy.

The Midshires board, led by Mike Scuba, the chief executive, will come under intense pressure from its one million-plus members to recommend the unsolicited £780 million offer from Halifax.

Members stand to receive windfalls of about £750 in the autumn, an extra £150 compared with the original offer from RBS. Last night, RBS refused to budge on the terms it struck with Midshires in August.

Halifax said its proposal offered significantly more value to Midshires members, as it represented a premium of between 23.8 and 28.9 per cent over the RBS deal.

Halifax said there would be no compulsory redundancies among the 2,400-strong workforce. The majority of staff and branch offices will be retained "over the short to medium term", while the brand will be kept for three years. RBS pledged to retain staff, branches and brand for a minimum of three years.

The City was unimpressed by the offer. Many analysts were expecting something more strategic from Halifax, given its £4 billion cash surplus, and some suggested the bank had been stung into action by criticism of its year-end results last week.

One leading analyst said Halifax would have to cut Midshires' costs by 30 to 50 per cent, with inevitable staff losses, if the bank were to hit its growth targets.

However, barring last-minute intervention by another suitor, most market watchers believe it will be difficult for the Midshires board not to accept the Halifax offer.

Reed abandons £17bn merger with Wolters

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

THE £17 billion merger of Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch international publishing and information group, and Wolters Kluwer, of The Netherlands, collapsed yesterday under the threat of regulatory constraints.

Reed's London-traded shares fell 57p to 620p as Nigel Stapleton, co-chairman of Reed Elsevier, said he was "extremely disappointed that we couldn't make the merger work". The decision to abort the proposed merger was taken, at a Reed Elsevier board meeting in London yesterday, when directors agreed they would not meet Wolters's demand that terms of the deal be re-negotiated because of conditions likely to be attached by the European Commission.

In a joint statement, Reed International and Elsevier, its Dutch partner, said their boards concluded that "to make the significant changes to the merger terms that Wolters Kluwer felt necessary to protect the interests of its shareholders would make the merger unattractive from the standpoint of the Reed International and Elsevier shareholders".

The companies said no other matters had arisen during the course of the financial due diligence between the parties that would otherwise have given cause for the merger to be cancelled.

Wolters appears to have been more pessimistic than Reed about the scale and financial impact of the likely disposals that might be ordered by Brussels in order to secure regulatory approval and asked for a larger share of the merged company.

Reed Elsevier and Wolters



Nigel Stapleton said Reed had decided not to go ahead "more in sorrow and not in anger"

Limelight defends float as it falls into red

By CHRIS AYRES

THE full extent of the woes of Limelight, the kitchens and bathrooms group, since it made its controversial debut on the stock market two years ago was laid bare yesterday.

The company, founded by Stephen Boler, incurred exceptional costs of £1.8 million last year. It also wrote off £4.1 million on the disposal of its windows division and a further £9.3 million of goodwill and exceptional costs. Limelight shares, floated at 175p, fell 1p to 38p.

Mr Boler has been heavily criticised for making £60 million from the flotation of the company, and then cashing in a large stake to set up a game reserve venture in South Africa. He still sits on the board as a non-executive director.

Andrew Starway, Limelight's recently appointed managing director, yesterday defended its flotation and Mr Boler's continued involvement. "The issues in 1997 could not be foreseen," he said. "Mr Boler has been very supportive in terms of guaranteeing our overdraft. He's the last person who enjoys the way this looks."

Limelight reported a 1997 pre-tax loss of £12.3 million, compared with profits of £2.8 million in 1996. Turnover was down slightly to £154.1 million, from £157 million. Losses per share were 11.5p (earnings of 1.4p). There will be no dividend.

Mr Starway said he had "dealt with the big structural issues" but that there was more work to be done. Limelight has integrated its Dolphin bathrooms and MKD kitchens businesses and re-launched its Moben brand.

Commentary, page 29

Granada to launch home shopping

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

GRANADA GROUP is joining with Littlewoods to launch a new home-shopping television channel.

They plan to launch the new channel in the autumn, to be available on all the new digital television services — satellite, cable and terrestrial. The venture could create up to 1,000 jobs in Liverpool over five years.

Steve Morrison, chief executive of Granada Media Group, said yesterday that the channel would feature "mainstream" goods from the 15,000 items in their home-shopping catalogues, which have more than four million regular customers.

Granada, a 50 per cent shareholder in British Digital Broadcasting, the main commercial digital terrestrial service, has always made it clear that it planned to launch a shopping channel as part of the 30-channel package.

Initially, Littlewoods, whose interests include football pools apart from retail and mail order, has 65 per cent of the venture and Granada 35 per cent. Granada, however, has an option to lift its stake to 50 per cent.

Barry Gibson, chief executive of Littlewoods, said he believed that in the next five or ten years digital would be the dominant form of television.

Granada plans to show the channel on existing television late at night in its own four ITV franchises — Granada, Yorkshire, Tyne-Tees and London Weekend Television.

Black Horse gallops toward Bradford & Bingley



Black Horse: marginal

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

LLOYDS TSB is negotiating the sale of its Black Horse estate agencies to Bradford & Bingley Building Society, it emerged yesterday.

Lloyds was the first bank to venture into estate agency when it set up Black Horse in 1982. In the property boom of the mid and late-1980s other lenders and insurers quickly followed, only to bail out after

the market crashed in 1999. Prominent casualties of the crash included the Prudential and Nationwide.

Analysts said the move would inevitably speed up corporate withdrawal from the sector, which continues to be highly competitive despite the strong recovery in property prices in the past two years.

Black Horse is the fourth largest estate agent, employing 3,000 people in 370

branches. But it was a marginal business for Lloyds TSB, which is able to market its financial services through its Abbey Life and Cheltenham & Gloucester subsidiaries.

A rumoured £50 million management buyout of Black Horse, led by managing director David Woodcock, who joined Lloyds when it acquired his East Anglian estate agency in 1982, failed to materialise. Yesterday Lloyds said Black

Horse had around £35 million in net assets.

Bradford & Bingley said the acquisition would double its presence on the high street, boosting its 3.5 per cent share of the mortgage market. No job losses are expected.

This is the second deal in a year between Lloyds TSB and B&B. Last May the society bought Mortgage Express.



B&B: doubling presence

Commentary, page 29

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British Energy shares race on £160m forecast

BY ADAM JONES

BRITISH ENERGY shares surged yesterday as the nuclear power group issued a bullish trading statement and distanced itself from the pricing squeeze faced by its rival coal-burning electricity generators.

British Energy told the market that profits for the year ending March 31 are likely to be more than £160 million, compared with £61 million last year, after a rise in sales and savings from its cost-cutting programme.

Analysts had been predicting profits of £100-£130 million, a British Energy spokesman said.

The group also took the

opportunity to remind investors that it has never had any "coal-backed contracts". These now-defunct supply deals obliged regional electricity companies to pay more for power supplied by coal-backed power plants.

Last week, National Power revealed that it must take a £130 million hit from the termination of these contracts, causing the share price to fall sharply.

Angelos Anastasiou, a Credit Lyonnais Laing analyst, said he was now expecting about £167 million in annual pre-tax profits from British Energy.

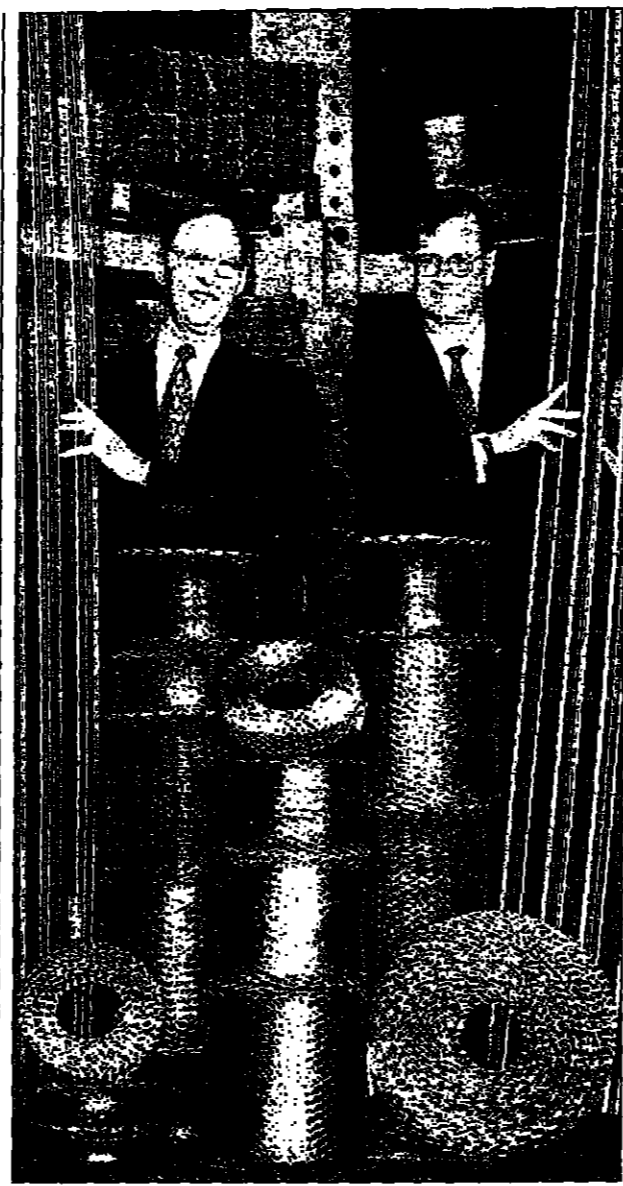
By early afternoon, the shares were standing 6 per

cent higher at 456p. British Energy was privatised by the last Government in 1996 and the shares have risen from 189p.

The spokesman said the effect of planned shutdowns for maintenance at nuclear power plants had been over-estimated by analysts.

Regulators scheduled seven such shutdowns at British Energy plants in the current financial year, compared to four last year. There should be only four next year.

The price paid for its electricity has also risen, although the increase has been constrained by fixed-price contracts.



John Roberts, left, and Phil Reeder, of Expamet

Expamet lifts payout

EXPAMET, the building and industrial products group, raised pre-tax profits from £7.2 million to £9.7 million in the year to December 31 after excluding non-recurring items. Earnings per share, on a similar basis, rose from 7.30p to 10.41p. A 2.15p final dividend lifts the total payout from 3.30p to 3.85p. Shares in Expamet, of

which Phil Reeder is chief executive, responded with a 9.2p rise to 141p. John Roberts, chairman, said: "Prospects for the existing operation in 1998 are good. With our strong balance sheet there is also the potential to make further acquisitions consistent with our strategic and financial objectives."

Mirror's profits up before costs of MIN deal

BY RAYMOND SNOODY
MEDIA EDITOR

MIRROR GROUP, the newspaper publisher, reported a rise in underlying pre-tax profit to £92 million from £82 million last year.

However, a £12 million exceptional charge for integration and financing costs, principally arising from the acquisition of Midland Independent Newspapers, left pre-tax profit of £80 million for 1997, down from £101 million in 1996. The company, whose flagship titles are *The Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror*, said turnover rose 4 per cent to £599 million.

There was no update on the proposed sale of the 46 per cent stake in Newspaper Publishing, the company that publishes *The Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday*.

Tony O'Reilly's Independent Newspapers, based in the Republic of Ireland, also owns 46 per cent of Newspaper Publishing and is expected to buy the *Mirror*'s stake this week. The Irish group is expected to take on £26 million in debt from and pay about £3 million in cash. In addition, Mirror Group will have a management services contract, to handle *The Independent* and run its "backroom", worth about £3.7 million a year for five years.

David Montgomery, *Mirror* Group chief executive, yesterday said the results demonstrated "the continuing robustness" of the core business, while the MIN acquisition had created a more broadly-based media business.

As a result of the MIN acquisition net debt increased to £222 million from £202 million and gearing to 89 per cent from 49 per cent. Cash flow from operating activities rose 13 per cent to £136 million.

Mr Montgomery said the "rejuvenation" of *The Mirror* was working and that cash sales — as opposed to discounted copies or special promotions — were up 30,000. The next stage would be to make improvements at the *Sunday Mirror*.

Underlying earnings rose 9 per cent to 15.6p a share. The total dividend is lifted 11 per cent to 5p, with a 3.5p final.

Ryanair adds jets to fight BA challenge

RYANAIR yesterday raised the stakes in "the battle of the peanut airlines" with a £670 million order for new planes. Faced with the imminent challenge of British Airways' new low-cost service, Go, the Irish airline demonstrated its own financial clout with an order for 25 Boeing 737-800s.

Ryanair, the longest-established low-fare airline in Europe, has options to buy 20 more, which could add £550 million to the order value. Ryanair said that it would finance its purchase through a mixture of cash and borrowings.

Astec directors voted out

EMERSON ELECTRIC, the US company that owns 51 per cent of Astec (BSR), yesterday voted out three directors of the UK electrical power products group. Michael Arrowsmith, finance director, Michael Smith, chief operating officer, and Neal Stewart, technical director and co-founder, who oppose plans to block dividend payments and buy out minority shareholders, are replaced by Stephen Cortinovis, Olivier Delage and Robert Staley, all Emerson nominees. *Commentary, page 29*

More jobs go at BSS

BSS, the industrial products group, yesterday said a further 100 staff would lose their jobs in a reorganisation, in addition to the 50 redundancies announced in December. The company's shares fell 20p to 40.5p after it said that, although trading was in line with expectations, a project to supply materials to a proposed semiconductor plant in Newport was several months behind schedule, deferring sales worth about £4.5 million. Redundancy costs will total around £1.5 million.

Waste group up 49%

WASTE RECYCLING, the waste control group, raised pre-tax profits 49 per cent to £6.1 million last year, on sales up 77 per cent to £27.2 million. Earnings advance from 8.1p to 10.9p and the total dividend is up 25 per cent to 2.5p a share after payment of a 1.9p final, up 0.4p. The shares gained 12p to 357.5p. The group said: "We continue to evaluate opportunities to acquire further waste management businesses and are optimistic about this year's prospects."

BSkyB finance chief dies

NICK CARRINGTON, chief financial officer of BSkyB, the satellite TV venture, has died aged 47 after a short illness. Mr Carrington was in his second spell at BSkyB. He was deputy director of finance from 1989 to 1991 when Sky launched its first four channels and merged with BSB to create BSkyB. He was then group finance director at PolyGram UK before returning to BSkyB in May 1995 as chief financial officer. BSkyB is 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of *The Times*.

W H Smith aims for buyback on top of £68m Menzies deal

BY DOMINIC WALSH

WH SMITH is to press ahead with a capital repayment to shareholders despite confirmation yesterday that it is to buy the rival John Menzies retail chain for £68 million.

The group has yet to say how much shareholders will receive, but in the wake of last month's £300 million sale of the Waterstone's bookshop chain, analysts believe that it could pay out up to £250 million through a share buyback.

Buying the 232-store Menzies chain takes Smith into the Scot-

tish market. Menzies's name will be kept in Scotland, where it was founded 165 years ago, but most of the 140 Menzies stores in England and Wales will be rebranded. Overlap with Smith's 509 shops will mean some job losses and estimated cost savings of more than £6 million a year.

The acquisition, which is subject to the approval of John Menzies shareholders, pushed Smith shares 10.2p higher to 503.5p, although observers gave warning that the integra-

tion of Menzies could prove difficult at a time when the group is still trying to revive the core WH Smith chain.

The sale follows John Menzies's announcement in January that it planned to withdraw from retailing in order to concentrate on its distribution business. In addition to seeking offers for its newsagents chain, Menzies said that it planned to demerge its Early Learning Centre toy shop business within three to five years.

IMI

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Drinks Dispensers



Fluid Power



Special Engineering

"1997 was a year of both financial and strategic achievement. We made good progress both in underlying businesses and through acquisition. Sales increased by 12 per cent, operating profit by 9 per cent and profit before tax and exceptional items by 7 per cent. This growth was particularly pleasing given the strength of sterling."

Gary Allen, Chief Executive

FULL YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER	1997	1996
Sales	£1,434m	£1,316m
Profit before tax and exceptional items	£146.5m	£137.5m
Exceptional items	£2.4m	£23.6m
Profit before tax	£148.9m	£161.1m
Adjusted earnings per share	30.7p	25.7p
Earnings per share	31.2p	31.5p
Dividend per share	14.0p	13.0p
Dividend cover before exceptional items	2.2	2.0
Gearing	58.2%	11.5%
Interest cover before exceptional items	26	31

"We are in a strong position to benefit from the emerging economic upturn in Europe and sustained US demand."

Sir Eric Pountain, Chairman

IMI plc, PO Box 216, Birmingham B6 7BA. Telephone: 0121 356 4848



CMG

"An excellent year..."

Summary results for the year to 31 December 1997

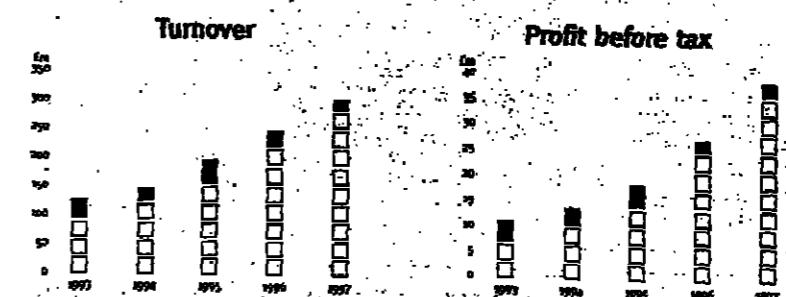
	1997	1996	Increase
Turnover	£303.0m	£245.2m	24% (43%*)
Operating profit	£37.2m	£26.9m	38% (64%*)
Profit before tax	£38.6m	£27.5m	40% (66%*)
Profit after tax	£24.7m	£17.1m	44% (70%*)
Earnings per share	38.6p	27.4p	41% (66%*)
Final dividend	5.2p	4.0p	30%

(payable on 20 May 1998 to all shareholders on the register on 20 April 1998. Ex-dividend date is 14 April 1998)

Highlights

- Group turnover growth virtually all organic
- Operating margin up from 11.0% to 12.3%
- Substantial turnover and profit growth in The Netherlands
- Strong growth in the UK; turnover up 34%, operating profit up 49%
- Germany returns to profit on turnover up 20% (45%*)
- Staff numbers up 4% to 4945

*at constant exchange rates



On the outlook for 1998, CMG Chairman, Cor Stutterheim, said, "We expect demand for our services to remain strong for the foreseeable future. We also expect the skills shortage in the IT industry to continue over the next few years, but we are confident that we can remain successful in recruitment. The future for our industry continues to look bright for the years ahead and we fully expect CMG to benefit from these favourable market conditions. We look forward to another year of good growth in 1998."

CMG plc is a leading European IT services group. Established in 1964, CMG now operates in more than 40 countries from its bases in the UK, The Netherlands, Germany, France and Belgium. The Group is listed on the London and Amsterdam Stock Exchanges.

Copies of the full 1997 Annual Report, which will be sent to shareholders during April, may be obtained from Michael Harrington, Group Communications, CMG plc, Telford House, Telford Street, London SW1H 9NE. Tel: 0207-233 0282.

Handwritten note: *من النص*

Dutch courage falters



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Brussels is being blamed for halting the £17.5 billion publishing merger of Reed Elsevier and Wolters Kluwer. The prospect of protracted dealings with the unpredictable Karel van Miert is undoubtedly a daunting one. But there are suspicions that if the will to make the deal work had been equally keen on both sides, then the parties would have pursued their grand design through Commissioner van Miert's idiosyncratically erected hoops.

It was last October when they unveiled their plan and they recognised even then that there would be areas of overlap so great as to demand disposals. The intervening months have seen the regulators raise more questions than the companies may have anticipated but as recently as last weekend, Reed was working on possible solutions. It seems that it was Wolters' directors who tired of the process, threw up their hands and said "Let's forget the whole thing."

It is hard to resist the parallel with that other mega-merger which has failed to come into being, the glorious wedding of SmithKline Beecham and Glaxo Wellcome. In both cases, the companies made such eloquent arguments in favour of the deals that it is difficult for them to walk away from the idea without a certain loss of credibility.

The market had been enthusiastic about the benefits to be had

from turning the Anglo-Dutch Reed Elsevier into even more of a Netherlands operation by joining forces with Wolters Kluwer. Its disappointment registered hard on the Reed share price.

The normally tricky area of personalities appeared to have been dealt with, as Nigel Stapleton, the Reed boss, prepared gracefully to let his Dutch counterpart take the top job. So cynics are now suggesting that perhaps the social issue of price had become a subject for discussion again. Did Wolters think this was the moment to try to renegotiate the terms more in favour of its shareholders? If that was the case, Mr Stapleton and his board were clearly not interested.

The companies always knew that there would have to be some disposals to keep Brussels happy; in legal publishing there were obvious monopoly problems. But given the nature of the two companies, and the cost savings to be made, negotiating with the bureaucrats as to what sacrifices might be required should have been worthwhile.

The delays Brussels has inflicted on the proposed British Airways link up with American Airlines demonstrate just how

powerful Karel van Miert is, but it will be to the detriment of industry if he is allowed to block deals by default.

Cazenove capers in the limelight

Kitchens and bathrooms can get extremely grubby, as shareholders in Limelight continue to learn. It was November 1996 when they saw the company in its freshly polished state and were induced to pour in £114 million, encouraged by the presence of snooty Cazenove in the role of salesman. Now the grime is all too obvious, and some of it looks to be the accumulation of more than just a few months.

Investors are unlikely to feel particular gratitude to the non-executive director who is ensuring that the company keeps afloat by guaranteeing its escalating overdraft. Stephen

Boyer, for it is he, took out a cool £60 million when the company floated. He wanted the money to fund his ambitions for saving the white rhino in his very own safari park in the Kalahari desert. Perhaps he realised that donations for this noble cause may have been hard to come by, but investors in Limelight may not have realised that they were part of a project aimed at conserving wildlife rather than shareholder value.

The company is now making much of the fact that it has replaced Stephen Cotter as chief executive, but the unfortunate Cotter was not responsible for giving Moben kitchens and Dolphin bathrooms such a sparkle that the shares sold at 175p, against last night's 38.5p. Stephen Boyer built the business and knew what he was selling. So presumably he was not too surprised when pulling out of the windows business, as Limelight has done, brought a write-off of

£13.4 million. Not every company that comes to market lives up to its prospectus, but this one has tarnished at record speed. The fact that Boyer is now back offering help and advice in a consultancy capacity is not guaranteed to ignite new enthusiasm for the shares.

The statement from Limelight yesterday contained insights which would have been useful additions to the prospectus that Cazenove so blithely allowed to be published. Now there are hints that there may be problems with the Moben image. The strategy for the future involves "repositioning of Moben as a retail brand". There is to be a "rationalisation of the showroom network and relocation of poorly sited units".

Would investors have been so keen to buy had they realised that the brand needed repositioning and so did some of the sites? Investors tend not to quibble

with Cazenove, believing that there will be treats handed out to compensate for the odd disappointment. This time, however, they should make their views known. And if they are also left holding shares in Astec, where Cazenove is trying to do them out of a decent price for their minority shares, they may just feel inclined to do so.

Inflation hawks' flight of fancy

Inevitable interest rate hawks continually point out that manufacturing represents only a fifth of the British economy. Its plight in the face of the strong pound and chill winds from Asia should not deter the Monetary Policy Committee from squeezing the inflationary pips out of consumers, they say.

That argument is true only up to a point. In the real world, it is impossible to ignore a death dive in one sector of the economy because it will, eventually, drag down others. For one thing, manufacturing is a considerable buyer of services. According to the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, manufacturing buys as much as

20 per cent of all British services. It is also likely that recession in manufacturing would, at some stage, have a psychological impact on consumers. Britain may now be predominantly a service economy but British people still accord disproportionate importance to manufacturing. Widget makers are still seen as more crucial to the economic health of the nation than hairdressers. A few banner headlines proclaiming large redundancies and company closures in our industrial heartlands would simply reinforce the caution and even fear that has come with the flexible labour market.

In any case, as the British Retail Consortium figures suggested yesterday, the British consumer is nothing like as rampant as the inflation hawks suggest. The risks for the economy are, as economists are wont to say, all on the downside.

Resale value

BANKS and insurers bought estate agents at the top of the market to compete with building societies. But the Pru and others found agencies were not just outlets but businesses that could lose vast sums in a slump. Lloyds TSB was in first and bought sensibly. Having bought a building society instead, it would be ironic if Lloyds sold its agencies at the top of the market to another society lender, Bradford & Bingley, that wants to boost its market share.

Laporte prefers deals to share buybacks

By CARL MORTISHED

JIM LENG, chief executive of Laporte, yesterday said the company would use its cash-rich balance sheet to buy new businesses rather than buy back shares.

Laporte yesterday impressed the City with a 14 per cent rise in profit from continuing businesses, adjusted for constant currencies. At the pre-tax level profits were up 4 per cent to £132 million, or 12 per cent at constant currencies in the year to December 31.

Laporte's drastic restructuring and a sharp squeeze on working capital has left the group cash-rich, with a net £130 million in funds. Mr Leng said the group would be spending the equivalent of 9 per cent of sales on capital expenditure and would seek to

buy businesses with leadership positions, suitable for the "Laporte treatment". He said: "We are not short of ideas."

Mr Leng said that Laporte's restructuring was largely complete, having achieved its target of 15 per cent operating margins and 25 per cent return on capital one year ahead of schedule. He has imposed new targets by adding two-and-a-half points to each measure.

Currency translation reduced sales by £57 million and profits by £10 million during the period. Mr Leng said Laporte's exposure to Asian turmoil was limited, with only 4 per cent of sales and profits coming from outside the US and Europe.

The chief executive's arrival at Laporte in 1995 was followed

by a profits warning and heavy restructuring charge that hit the share price. Mr Leng said the margin improvement was not exclusively cost-related. "There is an element of slash and burn. We reduced our head office staff from 180 to 60. We have jettisoned products where the market would not pay a decent price." He pointed to volume growth of 7 per cent in speciality chemicals.

Laporte is ratcheting up investment levels, with research and development spend up 20 per cent on the previous year. Capital expenditure was twice the rate of depreciation last year and a new R&D laboratory for the fine chemicals business is expected to open this year. Some £20 million

has been invested in a new compounding facility. Mr Leng said the estimated £30 million cash investment restructuring programme had already been recouped, leaving the cash cost to shareholders at nil. Laporte ended the year with nil gearing and £130 million of net cash.

Laporte's speciality organics division raised profits by 23 per cent to £24 million during the period, while pigments showed a rise of just 3 per cent to £33 million. Laporte's chemicals and electronic chemicals business managed an 8 per cent rise in profit to £44 million with growth picking up in printed circuitboard chemicals in Taiwan.

Tempos, page 30

IMI encouraged by strong orders

By PAUL DURMAN

IMI, the manufacturing group, is confident of achieving further growth this year in spite of a "flat" UK economy.

Gary Allen, chief executive of the company, based in Birmingham, said that order books were particularly strong on the Continent and in the US, which together account for more than half the group's £1.4 billion of annual sales. Germany's economy was "noticeably improving".

IMI, whose products include radiator valves, drink dispensers and pneumatic equipment, was reporting a 6.5 per cent rise in underlying pre-tax profits to £146.5 million, for 1997. Sterling's strength cost IMI about £20 million, but the group was keen not to make too much of this, pointing out that this was largely offset by £18.9 million of profits from five acquisitions. Mr

Allen said IMI was planning on the basis of a DM3 pound. The shares rose 9p, to 459 1/2p. Paul Compton, analyst with Merrill Lynch, said that he was astonished that they had not risen further. He said that IMI's strategy of buying good products and using its distribution network to increase sales meant that "the buy argument is virtually faultless". He added: "This is the next Siebe. It has that sort of security to it."

The fluid power division gave the best performance, lifting its profits by 25 per cent to £38 million. Drinks dispensers lifted profits to £35.7 million (£33.8 million), equal to a 14 per cent rise before currency effects. An 8.0p final payout, to be a foreign income dividend, lifts the total 7.7 per cent, to 46p.

Tempos, page 30

Close shares rise after 30% profit

By RICHARD MILES, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

SHARES in Close Brothers, the independent merchant bank, rose nearly 7 per cent yesterday after it reported a 30 per cent increase in first-half profits to £36.7 million.

The price of the shares, which has doubled in the past year, rose 45p to 726 1/2p after the company said market making, corporate finance and factoring had all done extremely well during the six months to January 31.

Corporate finance proved particularly strong, as the bank completed 26 deals with a value of £2 billion, including the £700 million sale of William Hill, the bookmaker, to Nomura. It would be difficult to repeat this performance in the second half, it said.

Dealing income at the market-making business, Winter floods, rose 18 per cent to £24 million. On the equity

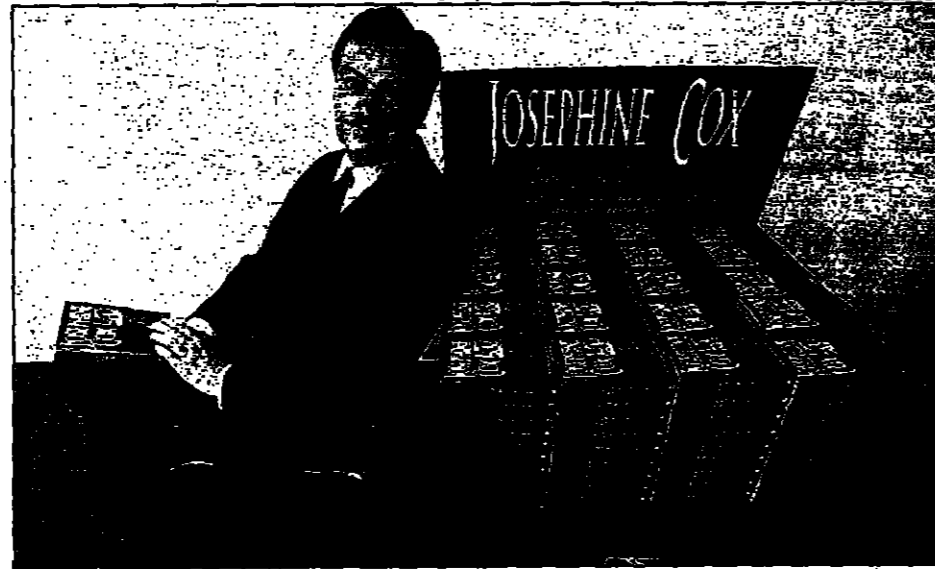
side, the bank had "weathered the October 1997 squall" to benefit from improved conditions in the New Year.

Strong competition took the shine of its asset finance business, which grew 13 per cent, while Prompt, the insurance premium financing business, struggled against a difficult market and falling commercial premiums.

Rod Kent, the chairman, said he was confident Close Brothers had access to sufficient capital to see it through the next expansion period. Its two biggest shareholders, Calcedonia Investments with 25 per cent, and Prudential with 11 per cent, fully supported the business, he said.

Mr Kent hinted at some small acquisitions, but said there was nothing imminent.

Tempos, page 30



Hutchinson confident of boost from superstores

TIM Hely Hutchinson, chief executive of Hodder Headline, the publishers, forecast yesterday that the British reading public should have access to between 20 and 30 "superstore" bookshops within the next three years (Raymond Snoddy writes). With such stores likely to

stock more than 100,000 books and the first superstore in Glasgow already trading well Mr Hely Hutchinson is expecting a continuing boost to book sales.

The Hodder Headline chief executive was speaking as the company announced record pre-tax profits of £8.2 million

in the year to December 31, a rise of 24 per cent.

One factor behind an improvement in margins was a 10 per cent reduction in the number of titles published but a 9 per cent increase in sales as more support was put behind those that were published. Mr Hely Hutchinson said the record results were achieved in uneven market conditions.

The Hodder Headline share price rose 14p to 239p. City analysts now expect pre-tax profits of around £9.5 million for the current year.

Hodder Headline, whose titles range from the memoirs of Sir Edward Heath and Dickie Bird, the cricket umpire, to the fiction of Tom Clancy and Dean Koontz, said yesterday that the current year had started well with UK booksellers continuing to report encouraging results.

One difficult area for Hodder is school textbooks with, according to Mr Hely Hutchinson, only £30 a year on average being spent on each secondary school pupil.

"This is bad for our business and it is also bad for children's education," he said. Earnings per share were 15.8p (13.3p), like-for-like publishing sales rose from £86.4 million to £91.6 million and the dividend for the year will be 7.2p (6.5p) after payment of a 5.0p final.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK
Stock Market Writer
of the Year

FTSE back above 5,800
as Wall St fears subside

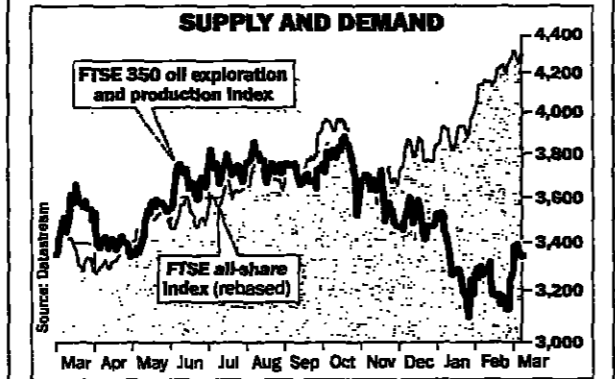
SHARE prices on the London stock market climbed back above the 5,800 level after Wall Street shrugged off another profits warning from one of its high-tech leaders. The bears were soon on the run after another drop in industrial and manufacturing output that reduced the prospect of interest rate rises...



Mike Hardy, left, and Kevin McDonald saw a modest rise in PolyPIPE profit despite higher raw material costs

The FTSE 100 index, after suffering a brief hiccup, eventually closed just below its best of the day with a rise of 36.0 to 5,818.9. Turnover was on the low side with 733 million shares changing hands. The halt of the £17.5 billion merger talks with Wolters Kluwer left Reed International nursing a fall of 5p to 620p. Brokers had high hopes of Reed creating one of the biggest publishers in Europe if the deal had gone ahead...

Isle of Man-based distribution group. WH Smith firmed 10 1/2 p to 503 1/2 p after confirming plans to pay £68 million for rival John Menzies realising arm which went up for sale in January. John Menzies responded with a jump of 13p to 441 1/2 p. The signal was coming through loud and clear at Pace Micro Technology as the price surged 5p to 44 1/2 p. Pace is one of six companies to be awarded the contract to supply British Digital Broadcasting with set-top boxes. The Pace share price collapsed from a peak of 235p last year after a profits warning.



MORE wrangling over the weekend between Opec member states has produced another oil self-off on world markets. North Sea Brent crude fell another 47 cents to \$14.12 (£8.62) a barrel and there are fears of further deterioration if the situation is not resolved. Last year it reached almost \$25 a barrel. However, over-production by Opec states, mild weather, the Far East economic crisis and the oil-for-food deal with Iraq have hit the price. Oil shares came under the hammer, with BP down 17 1/2 p to 838p. Shell down 6 1/2 p to 428 1/2 p. Enterprise 6p off to 56 1/2 p and Lando 6 1/2 p lower to 285 1/2 p. Jurgen Lunshof of Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker, said: "The longer the wrangle goes on, the longer this situation will take to resolve itself."

buying by several directors. Michael Southman, chairman, has bought 100,000 shares (0.43 per cent) at 35p. Another director has picked up 15,000 shares at 35p. Speculative buying hoisted Manx & Overseas 1 1/2 p to 8 1/2 p. Desmond Land, the former chairman of Premier Land, has been appointed chairman and managing director of the company to a 4.27 million, or 8.86 per cent. Details of a £15 million contract for Welsh Water to build storm overflows, provided a 10p flip at 235p to Tibby Douglas. The construction company is due to unveil results later this week. GILTED-EDGED: Bond prices scored gains from the last industrial output mix. Oxford Inst. 307p (+14p). Br Airways 604p (+27p). Dudley Jankins 322p (+11p). Tibby Douglas 235p (+10p). Photobank 306p (+13p). Pison 319p (+13p). Wabco 259p (+12p). Ryk Bk Scot 839p (+11p). AMVSCAP 804p (+11p). Fairley Gp 551p (+23p). Gold Fields Prop 122p (+12p). Candover 952p (+25p). Oosen Gp 702p (+7p). Scholl 284p (+7p). Real Time 418p (+6p).

There are qualms that Jim Laporte's regime at Laporte has been more blunderbuss than new broom. Laporte has removed about 40 per cent of its staff along with a third of group sales. That kind of strategy, if it is to succeed, will inevitably raise operating margins. Sure enough, Laporte has met its targets of 15 per cent return on sales and 25 per cent return on capital, a year ahead of schedule. Mr Laporte emphatically believes Laporte can continue this improvement. He has added 2 1/2 points to each of his profitability targets, but he can be under no illusion that the hard task lies ahead. Laporte has little far left to cut and generating margin improvement from sales is more difficult than sacking people - albeit better for morale. Nevertheless, Laporte deserves the benefit of the doubt. His figures suggest that real volume growth is

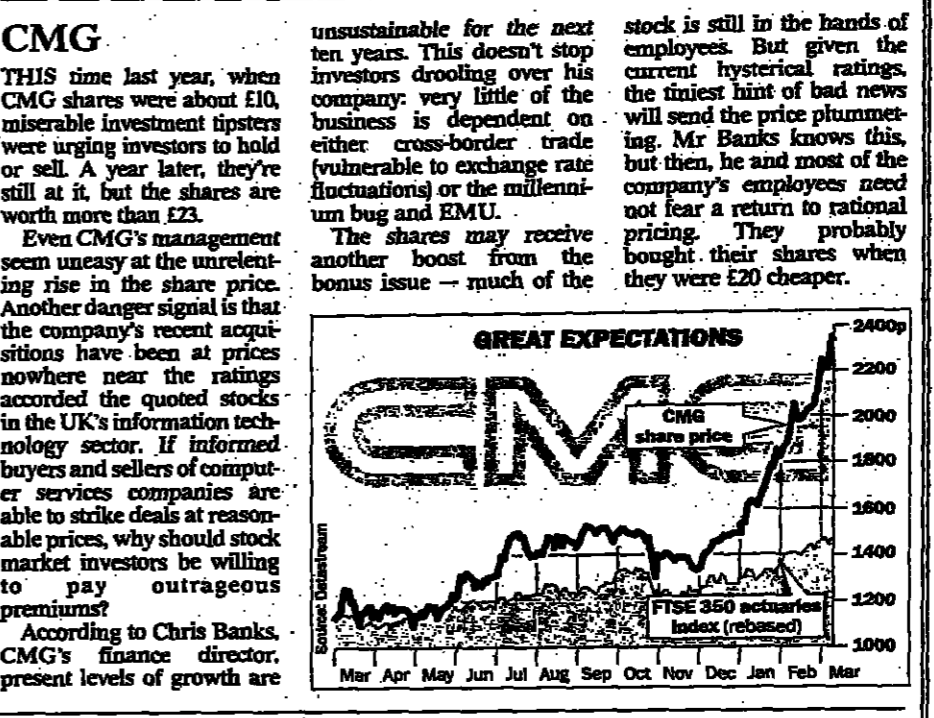
Table of stock market indices: New York (midday), Tokyo, Hong Kong, Amsterdam, Sydney, Frankfurt, Singapore, Brussels, Paris, Zurich, London, Athens Extrusions, BGR, Bass B, Diageo B, Eurotunnel 01/05, Monsoon, Quaker Hiltner, Sanctuary Wv.

Table of stock prices: Wates City n/p (9), RISES: Hall Eng, Stomline Hedge, BTR, Biocomps Int, Liberty, Calfins, Close Bro, Williams, BPP, Wabco, Oxford Inst, Br Airways, Dudley Jankins, Tibby Douglas, Photobank, Pison, Wabco, Ryk Bk Scot, AMVSCAP, Fairley Gp, Gold Fields Prop, Candover, Oosen Gp, Scholl, Real Time.

Table of stock prices: FALLS: Reed Int, BSS Gp, RMS Gp, Utd Shabucks, Scotia, B Patterson, AMVSCAP, Fairley Gp, Gold Fields Prop, Candover, Oosen Gp, Scholl, Real Time.

Dispense with low rating

IMI is an unimpressive engineering and an inadequate description of its activities, which include making heating boilers, soft drinks dispensers and the pneumatic parts of industrial handling systems. Perhaps that is why shares in this well-regarded group sit, modestly, on less than 14 times forecasts of this year's earnings. IMI has had a busy couple of years, buying half a dozen businesses, and selling or closing even more. The benefits are not immediately apparent from the latest results, which show only a 6.5 per cent rise in pre-tax profits. Beneath the surface, there are signs that IMI has hit on a promising strategy to unite its three and a half divisions: specialist products with strong market positions that are able to benefit from the group's strengths in distribution. Special engineering is the



CMG share price and FTSE 350 index (rebased) from March to February.

was worth little more than £1.60. Yesterday, Close Brothers broke through the £7 level, taking its market value to £900 million. Investors must ask themselves whether the stock can sustain this growth, given that Close Brothers is no longer the mirror it once was. Certainly, underlying business appears sound. Two of its three core markets - corporate finance for mid-caps and market making - are in rude health, while asset finance is on a steady keel. Close Brothers' prospects will depend to a greater extent on whether it can continue to run the business as if it were still small: the bank essentially comprises a cluster of businesses, each employing no more than 100 staff - businesses you can get your arm around, as Rod Kent, chairman, described them yesterday. The record justifies continued holding.

Table of commodity prices: COMMODITIES, ICE-LOR (London 600pts), CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB), RUBBER (RSS), COPPER, MEAT & LIVESTOCK.

Table of LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES: Long Gil, German Gov Bond (Bond), German Gov Bond (Bob), Italian Gov Bond (BTP), Japanese Gov Bond (JGB), Three Mth Sterling, Three Mth Eurodollar, Three Mth Euroswap, Three Mth Euribor, FTSE 100.

Table of MONEY RATE: Base Rates Clearing Bank, Treasury Bills, Prime Bank Bills, Sterling Money Rates, Overnight open 7% close 7%, Local Authority Depos, Secured CDs, Dollar Bills, Building Society CDs.

Table of LIFE OPTIONS: Table with columns for contract numbers and prices.

Table of EURO AND MONEY RATE: Table with columns for currency and rate.

Table of GOLD AND SILVER METALS: Table with columns for metal type and price.

Labour pains over the future of PFI

The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) ranks alongside world peace, reducing traffic congestion and making the English cricket team competitive as one of those ideas that everyone is in favour of but no one can actually agree a way forward. For the Government, PFI is a means of carrying out vital infrastructure projects without damaging the public sector balance sheet. For the construction and business services sectors, it means juicy long-term contracts. Even the City lends PFI its full support, eagerly anticipating healthy advisory fees and commission-generating, finance-raising work.

Yet it appears hard to believe that, five years after the launch of the PFI, the participants are still struggling to get the formula right. PFI-style projects have provided a total of £8.5 billion of funding during this period — well short of the original target of £14 billion by the end of this coming financial year.

If political will-power alone was enough to ensure the success of PFI, then the Government should by now be reaping the rewards of the initiative. The new Government has taken to PFI with all the zeal of a convert, employing all its, by now, trademark techniques to try to push the project along. First, there was the policy review. Now there is the PFI taskforce, led by the compulsory private sector recruit — in this case, Adrian Montague, former head of international project finance at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson.

Yet still the PFI stubbornly refuses to achieve lift-off. Labour claims to have signed PFI projects valued at £1.5 billion — hardly a big advance on the Conservative record and a tiny fraction of total public infrastructure spending.

The PFI gremlin lurks deep in the system. One of the principle attractions of PFI is that it shares the burden of risk between the risk-averse public sector and the risk-taking private sector. The private sector wants to get deals signed quickly, working on the basis that although a few mistakes will be made on the way it is better to keep generating new business. Whitehall arrives at the negotiating table with a different agenda. Its main task is seen as ensuring that no public money is wasted. Civil servants will run up to 400 separate risk models for any project before deciding to proceed. PFI agreements run to hundreds of pages of law, technical specifications and design requirements, so it is not too surprising to find that big projects can take up to three years to be formalised.

For the Civil Service, PFI represents only a fraction of total expenditure of a government department and the job is normally left to a mid-ranker. The high-fliers are channelled into policy-making — devising all those ideas that look so great on paper — like the PFI. The private sector is left complaining that the Government's PFI managers are simply not up to the complexity of the task.



The PFI gremlin lurks deep in the system. One of the principle attractions of PFI is that it shares the burden of risk between the risk-averse public sector and the risk-taking private sector.

MARKETING

Stark warning for corporate hospitality

The Gold Cup favourite at Cheltenham is called See More Money. This is ironic since, if the scaremongers are to be believed, this might be the last time scores of companies choose to entertain their business contacts at one of the corporate hospitality events of the year.

The instant reaction to the Law Commission's recommendations for new laws to tackle the abuse of corporate hospitality (70 per cent of its recommendations become law) was that companies might be reluctant to indulge in this style of marketing in the future.

But the caterers who make a killing from corporate entertaining should not rush to pack up their tents. The commission's plans to punish bribery are primarily, though not exclusively, aimed at public servants. If private companies abide by some fundamental rules they can happily entertain safe in the knowledge that the fraud squad will not come knocking on the door.

Firstly, as long as senior management of a company is aware of and consents to its employees being entertained, then there should be no grounds for allegations of corruption. But perhaps the most important reason why the changes should not have a significant impact on the marketing industry is because corporate hospitality is rarely used for securing new customers but, instead, for retaining existing ones.

In the Law Commission's eyes, building stronger links with existing business partners (or using corporate hospitality as a means of obtaining useful information about a company) is a legitimate business practice. The commission seeks to stop companies, and in particular public bodies, from using lavish incentives or "sweeteners" to gain new business. The difference between inviting a prospective customer to a clay-pigeon shoot and, on the other hand, sending him plane tickets and keys to your villa in Corfu could be between that of respectability and a spell in Ford Open Prison.

"It's going to be a question of degree. That's how it's going to be judged," says Charles Webb, chairman of the Corporate Hospitality & Event Association.

The line between hospitality and what constitutes bribery is far from straight.

JULIAN LEE

Fresh thinking offers flexible approach to pensions problem

Any scheme should offer scope to help the poorest, says Tony Christopher

The consultation papers on both stakeholder pensions and individual savings accounts (Isas) lead me uncomfortably to the conclusion that neither really approaches people's future needs in the best way — certainly not in a way likely to be acceptable, let alone attractive.

The all too obvious weaknesses in the Isa proposals have already been widely publicised. What is missing is a clear acknowledgement that, there might, indeed should, be provision for a link between Isas and whatever is to come on supplementary pensions. If Isas are not seen as laying a trail for retirement age provision, they are a bad mistake.

The Isa and stakeholder pensions are aimed broadly at a large proportion of the same market: the 11 million people who are not in an employer's or a personal pension scheme and who, in the main, the less well paid. It is difficult to imagine that many of them will be able to afford to contribute to both. And it is not at all clear, given National Savings and other existing savings schemes, how the whole expensive paraphernalia of an Isa is justified. Paps and Isas, however, as may be used as well as Isas.

But it is necessary to challenge the desirability of so narrow a concept as a stakeholder pension. The time has surely come to set aside such a conventional approach and talk about provision for retirement.

The clear issue the UK Government is facing is that it is no longer affordable to uprate basic state pensions beyond inflation nor to see a future political will to fill the consequent needs gap for those who, in their working lifetimes, could reasonably have made such a provision for themselves.

What would not be helpful would be a poor, cheaper substitute for occupational pension schemes or employers with de-



When people retire they should not be required by law to buy an annuity, but at present this is their only option

defined benefit pension schemes will, inevitably, be attracted to switch — as has been the experience in the US. The direct contribution plans introduced in the US Revenue Act 1978 have led to a phenomenal move away from direct benefit plans — not least because employers found them much cheaper.

What our trade union movement will resist, rightly, is anything that encourages employers to provide full portability within the EU.

Thus, while there could hardly be objection to voluntary contributions beyond the minimum (subject, because of tax benefits, to a cap) what we should be seeking to provide for is enough money to give a reasonable, but comfortable, addition to the state pension for those who, otherwise, will not have that unless the State provides it.

To accomplish this, compulsory will be unavoidable and if there is compulsion what is required of people must be seen to be fair and attractive. It must not be, nor look like, taxation or increased national insurance

contributions, which it easily could do. To accept this at the outset makes it easier to move on with a different approach.

So far only orthodox thinking seems to have featured in what would be pension providers have been saying, but, unless we do something fresh, we shall go on perpetuating the weaknesses in what we have now. We have to provide:

□ personal ownership, thus providing full portability within the EU

□ rock-bottom costs

□ best value for money

with statutory requirements, which could include care in old age subject perhaps to tax considerations. On death such a fund would form part of the deceased's estate. This would be perceived as honest and attractive by many.

□ purchasing an annuity in the usual way

□ requiring everyone on retirement to pay to Government from their fund such a sum as is required, by periodic actuarial valuation. The Government would be responsible for paying a supplementary pension and for inflation-proofing it. This means the Government is assured about the citizen's minimum income and because the State is both insurer and payer there are no regulation costs, no private-sector profits to be met and, assuming payment is with the basic state pension, no extra payment costs.

Any surplus in an individual's fund would be for the individual to do with as he or she wished, or he or she could be required to maintain a fund for old-age care provision similar to the personal retirement fund outlined above. This

means that all receive what they put in (and what is put in for them if employers contribute) plus growth. What could be envisaged, putting it simply, for a 40-year working life, is 30 or so years of equities and a progressive shift to lower-risk funds nearer retirement.

This idea would enable an effective contribution to individual retirement needs a good deal earlier than the present proposals, benefiting the Treasury without cost to the citizen.

The question of which employers, if any, should contribute compulsorily, and to what extent, should be for discussion. Looking at the reaction to a minimum wage — even discounting the extent to which it is over-reaction — the economic fact is probably that too many small employers would find it hard to afford. What is more, it could be a strong disincentive to extending the provision of occupational schemes. Perhaps it would be wise to build in a national employers' responsibility into the minimum wage; that could offset some economic

Good returns

WHAT an agreeable place to work Lloyds TSB must be. Not only has Sir Nicholas Goodison, deputy chairman, landed a £5.2 million personal profit from his share options, but they are pretty generous with special bonuses. Sir Nicholas is keen on old clocks and barometers, and he will be able to afford quite a few when he cashes in his options and retires. This may not be too far off, either, because he is 63 and this exercise of almost

780,000 share options has a delectable look to it. The bulk of them, 546,000, date back to 1989, when Lloyds and TSB were as yet unmerged, and have to be exercised within ten years or they lapse.

I am unable to ask the great man what he plans to do with the money, and it would, I suppose, be an impertinence. "I don't think he will speak about a personal decision anyway," Lloyds TSB tells me. Also doing well is Sir Simon Hornby, who gets a £50,000 special bonus for his "considerable efforts" as chairman of Lloyds Abbey Life for five and a half years until the bank bought in the minority shares. A period during which he was paid as well, of course. There is, alas, no indication of the huge pay-off Lloyds TSB is going to have to award Andrew Longhurst, former boss of the Cheltenham & Gloucester, when he goes next month. That will have to wait until the 1998 accounts. But I have heard a figure of £2 million mentioned.



"OK, there's somebody else but it's not serious"

□ Société Générale has deemed this an appropriate time to start securities trading in South Korea. I like the understated way SocGen refers to the troubles there: "Although the Korean economy is currently going through an adjustment process..." It

brings to mind the famous remarks of Emperor Hirohito, conceding defeat after Hiroshima and Nagasaki: "The war situation has developed, not necessarily to Japan's advantage."

Change of Liffe

SIGNS that the split is deepening at Liffe between the modernisers and the traditionalists. There are those who would rely on a super new computerised trading system at a super new building at Spitalfields, and those who rather enjoy the current set-up whereby a huddle of testosterone-fuelled males in bright blazers shout at each other. The Liffe board

has called a general meeting of members — will they wear their jackets and shout at each other, I wonder?

The board has decided to "review its premises requirements" and look for "the most cost-effective solution", which looks like a bit of fence-sitting put in to mollify those who do not much care for a move to Spitalfields. A decision not to go there would be an enormous U-turn. Daniel Hodson, Liffe's chief executive, says: "It doesn't mean we're proposing not to proceed with the Spitalfields project. It's very much a possibility." Sounds like a definite maybe, I say, teasing. He bats it straight back. "It's a definite maybe."

□ IT SEEMS Otakar's, the rather splendid chain of bookstores now coming to the market, was put together in someone's lunch hour at Warburg's, because this is where Philip Dunne, chairman, was working more than ten years ago when he was approached for help by a long-standing friend, James Henegge. Both put in an unspecified amount of money, worth considerably more today. (Henegge will not say how much of the £30 million the company is valued at is his, and seems to think he can get away without saying so as the float progresses; he will learn.) Hard to imagine Warburg's, ten years ago, was so relaxed a place that you could cheerfully put together your own deals in your spare time. But it seems it was.

Mail shot

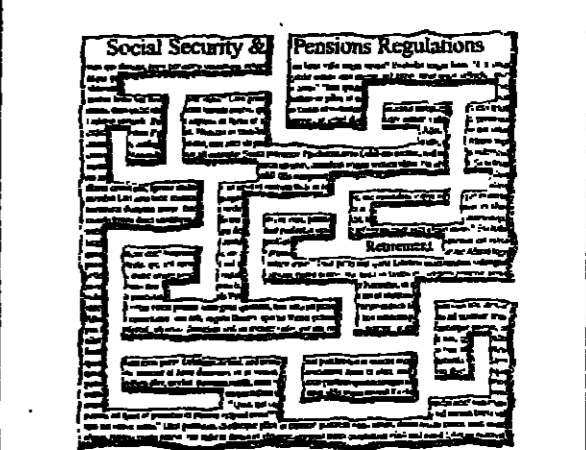
THE LAWYER has sent a postcard to various City law firms in an attempt to drum up advertising. It features a familiar, black and white shot of Lich Ramirez Sanchez, the international terrorist better known as Carlos the Jackal. "Murders & Executions," it says under the picture. Crossed out, substituted with the words "Mergers & Acquisitions". Who said lawyers have no sense of humour? On second thoughts, I prefer them without one.

MARTIN WALLER



Carlos the Jackal chilling mail shot from The Lawyer

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Générale des Eaux submits merger proposal to Havas

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

COMPAGNIE Générale des Eaux, the French conglomerate, yesterday moved to take over Havas, the media group, completing the first stage of an ambitious plan to become an international communications group.

After months of speculation, Jean-Marie Messier, 41, the chairman of Générale des Eaux, submitted plans for a merger to the boards of both companies. Havas shareholders, who look certain to approve the proposals at a general meeting to be called within the next two months, will receive a dividend of Fr107 (£10) per share.

Last year, Générale des Eaux took a 30 per cent stake in Havas, which in turn has a dominant 34 per cent stake in Europe's biggest pay-TV company, Canal Plus.

Yesterday's move will be decisive in the transformation of the conglomerate from a

construction and environment service business into a group focused on the media and telecommunications industry.

The company will employ more than 230,000 people and have an annual turnover of about Fr220 billion, with a quarter of its income from its communications arm.

Pierre Dauterive, the chairman of Havas, will step down and be replaced by a close associate of M. Messier, Eric Lioy.

The takeover of the 163-year-old Havas, the world's fifth biggest media company with a turnover of Fr51.5 billion, was imposed by M. Messier as part of his drive to create a vertically integrated media group. This will combine Canal Plus with Havas's publishing interests and Générale des Eaux's telecommunications business.

The move will be followed closely by BT, the French conglomerate's partner in

Cegetel, the telecommunications subsidiary aiming to control 20 per cent of the French market by the end of the decade.

The deal will also interest British advertising agencies, with Havas's subsidiary, Havas Advertising, the world's eighth biggest agency, looking to merge with "an Anglo-Saxon partner".

Havas's travel agency chain, Havas Voyages, is likely to be sold to Amex of the United States.

Analysts say M. Messier's plan is a spectacular gamble designed to create what one described as a "European Time Warner".

Although there is some scepticism over M. Messier's chances of revolutionising a company that has specialised in water treatment, his reputation as the "golden boy" of French business has helped to silence many of the doubters.



Duncan Davidson, left, and John White, chief executive, believe that Persimmon is well placed to build market share

Persimmon aims to build position

PERSIMMON, one of Britain's largest residential builders, yesterday announced record pre-tax profits in 1997 and warned its competitors that it was in its best condition ever to win market share (Kathy Lipari writes).

Profits rose 53 per cent to £50.5 million before tax after the company boosted its operating margins by a fifth to 11.8 per cent. Duncan Davidson, chairman, said operating margins in the current year were up about 15 per cent on the same time a year ago.

He said: "I believe that Persimmon is in the strongest position in its history. We have

national coverage, an excellent landbank, a fine range of homes and a very strong management team."

The company sold 6,521 homes during the year, up from 6,008 in 1996, resulting in a sales increase of 17 per cent to £523.1 million. However, Mr Davidson

said Persimmon had considerable scope to increase market share from its current level of 4.5 per cent in the new homes market.

Earnings rose 40 per cent to 21.3p a share. A final dividend of 6.8p lifts the total to 10p from 9.5p in 1996. The shares rose 5 1/2p to 247p.

C&RP soars 82% to a record £11m

By Carl Mortished

PROFITS at Capital & Regional Properties surged 82 per cent to a record £11.1 million after a year in which it was transformed into a specialist retail and leisure property group.

Martin Barber, chairman, said the rapid pace of deals left Capital with opportunities to add significant value but he gave warning that "the market itself is not advancing at the pace which it has over the last couple of years".

Capital's net asset value per share at December 31 rose 28 per cent to 272p after an 11 per cent rise in the value of its investment portfolio. The company acquired £207 million of retail property and sold £97 million of assets. Mr Barber said that five shopping centres bought last summer gained 6 per cent in value during the six months under Capital's ownership.

Operating profits rose from £5.6 million to £6.1 million after a 60 per cent rise in gross rents. Pre-tax profits benefited from £4.8 million of profits from disposals. The dividend for the year is up 17 per cent to 3.5p after a 30 per cent gain in earnings to 15.8p.

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Hall Engineering focuses on Asia

SHARES in Hall Engineering rose 15 1/2p to 194p after the group said it was ready to plunge into the choppy Asian markets in the search for growth. Richard Hall, the chairman, believes there are opportunities in Singapore and Hong Kong in particular. Otherwise, he said, conditions remain difficult in many of its markets and the tough competitive environment coupled with continuing currency fluctuations, posed a big challenge.

Readymix 45% increase

READYMIX, the building materials company based in the Irish Republic, increased its pre-tax profits by 45 per cent, to Ir£12.6 million (£10.5 million), in 1997. The company said that an "unparalleled level of construction activity" in the Republic, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man had been driven by the buoyant economy and favourable weather conditions throughout the year. Earnings per share rose 31 per cent, to Ir19.58p. A final dividend of Ir5.7p lifts the total to Ir5.2p a share, from Ir4.3p.

Tay trading profit up

TAY HOMES, the housebuilder, raised its trading profits by 27 per cent to £1.8 million in the six months to the end of December. Pre-tax profits fell from £4.17 million to £1.76 million because of a previous half-year disposal. Sales fell from £50.8 million to £50.16 million although the average price of its houses rose from £77,500 to £86,200. The dividend rises from 1.7p to 1.8p out of normalised earnings up from 3.0p to 4.0p. The group has been able to increase its land bank to 4,250 plots, slightly higher than last year.

Polype confident

POLYPE, the building materials group, raised pre-tax profits 6.2 per cent to £12 million in the half year to end December on sales up 28 per cent to £120 million. Earnings rose 3.2 per cent to 4.80p and the half-year dividend rose 12 per cent to 1.03p. The shares fell 8 1/2p to 177p after Kevin McDonald, chairman, said: "The group balance sheet is robust and from this strong base we are, overall, in less than buoyant conditions, confident of yet another satisfactory outcome for the current year."

Manganese warning

SHARES in Manganese Bronze, which makes London taxis, fell from 412 1/2p to 403 1/2p after the group revealed a fall in first half pre-tax profits from £4.1 million to £1.4 million and warned that it expected profits for the full year, to the end of July to be lower than the previous year. The introduction of the TX1 model cost £2.5 million. Half year earnings fell from 17.32p to 5.27p although the dividend rises from 3.50p to 4.00p. Hugh Lang, chairman, said: "Demand for the TX1 is very strong."

Avon Rubber in US buy

AVON RUBBER is to acquire Hi-Life Rubber in America for \$36 million (£22 million) cash. Hi-Life, which is based in Wisconsin, makes and distributes liners for the dairy industry. It made \$4.6 million in the year to December and has net assets of \$6.9 million. The deal is the third made by Avon during the past five months. Steve Wilcox, the chief executive, said the move reinforced the company's strategy of enhancing its portfolio and geographic coverage. The shares rose 1 1/2p to 657 1/2p.

Vymura advances

VYMURA, the wallcoverings manufacturer, raised pre-tax profits 15.9 per cent to £5.1 million last year, after close control of costs and margins. Sales fell from £43.8 million to £41 million, because of disappointing overseas markets, especially in North America, where sales were nearly halved. Eastern Europe, specifically Poland and Russia, is to be the main target for expansion this year. Earnings per share increased 19.3 per cent to 14.2p and the total dividend for the year rose 0.4p to 5.4p.

Dredging sales ahead

BRITISH DREDGING, the aggregates, ship repair and builders merchant group that is currently in bid talks, raised pre-tax profits from £2.1 million to £2.9 million in 1997 on sales up from £42 million to £44.5 million. Earnings fell from 12.46p to 11.10p after a reversal from a tax credit of £44,000 to a charge of £976,000, although the total dividend rises from 5.9p to 6.5p. Net assets per share rose from 138p to 141p and the shares rose 1/2p to 180 1/2p. On the bid approach, the company says discussions are continuing.

Growth of IT forecast to slow

By CHRIS AYRES
THE heady levels of growth being seen in the information technology sector are unsustainable in the long term, the finance director of one of the stock market's most successful computer services companies said yesterday.

Chris Banks, of the Anglo-Dutch company CMG, said the firm had recruited 2,000 staff in the year to December 31, boosting the workforce by 40 per cent. "The rates of growth we are seeing now, if you look at the next ten years, are unsustainable," he said.

CMG aims to recruit another 2,000 staff this year, although Mr Banks said the market for new staff would get tougher as the industry's skills shortage continued. He said CMG was seeing annual wage inflation of 10 per cent, although this was offset by offering staff share schemes.



Confident Trevor Finn, the chief executive, still has £40 million earmarked to spend on expanding Pendragon's car dealerships this year

New franchises fuel Pendragon

By KATHY LIPARI
THE purchase of a fleet of new dealerships helped Pendragon, the car retailer, lift pre-tax profits 20 per cent to £18.1 million last year. The acquisitions were performing to expectations and had contributed about £1 million to profits, said the company, although they had affected overall margins.

Record at British Vita beats City expectations

By MARTIN BARROW
BRITISH VITA, the polymers, fabrics and fibres company, said stable raw material prices helped offset the adverse impact of the strength of sterling in 1997, when pre-tax profits rose to a record.

The company reported a 10 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £66.2 million yesterday, ahead of City expectations. Earnings rose to 19.8p a share from 18.3p.

Despite a reduction in turnover to £85.4 million from £85.8 million, the company lifted operating profits to £55.5 million from £54 million, with operating margins up by a fifth.

Mr McGee, chairman, said the overall business environment was more favourable in 1997 than in 1996. The company had succeeded in repositioning activities to improve its performance in some of the tougher markets.

Raw materials prices were generally stable, with the exception of some reduction in polyester fibre prices and increases in specific polymers within the industrial division. Generally, increases anticipated during the fourth quarter did not materialise.

Regal revamp to cost up to £90m

By DOMINIC WALSH
REGAL HOTEL Group is to change its name and rebrand its hotels as part of a three-year capital expenditure programme costing between £75 million and £90 million.

Successors named as Candover rises 35%

By RICHARD MILLS
CANDOVER, the investment trust company that specialises in venture capital, has reported a 35.2 per cent rise in 1997 pre-tax profits to £7.3 million.



Brooke to retire next year

and the £360 million acquisition of UPN from United News & Media. Mr Brooke, who intends to retire at next year's annual meeting, said that the main event of the year had been the successful closing of the £50 million Candover 1997 Fund, which includes a co-investment of £100 million by Candover.

Golden Hope Plantations Berhad

Registered Office: 13th Floor, Menara PNB, 301-A, Jalan Tun Razak, 50400 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

INTERIM REPORT FOR THE SIX MONTHS ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1997

Table with 4 columns: Item, Group (6 months ended, 6 months ended), Company (6 months ended, 6 months ended). Rows include Turnover, Investment and other income, Operating profit, etc.

NOTES
1) The exceptional item comprises: Gain on compulsory land acquisition 49,555

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

Multiple columns of legal notices including 'BANDUNG INVESTMENT LIMITED', 'PROSPECT FLOORING LIMITED', 'SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMPANY', etc.

Confident funds put trust in FTSE 250

By ALAN MURRAY
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT
FUND MANAGERS are shifting their attention to stocks outside the FTSE 100 index as confidence grows that consumer spending is set to remain strong.

Harvested Croon - Tjannes

Table with 4 columns: Item, Group (6 months ended, 6 months ended), FFB, Palm oil, Palm kernel, Rubber, Cocoa, Copra.

Equities extend rally

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	BANKS	BREWERIES, PUBS & REST	BUILDING MATERIALS	CHEMICALS	CONSTRUCTION	DISTRIBUTORS
Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Barclays Bank 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50

ENGINEERING VEHICLES	FOOD MANUFACTURERS	HEALTHCARE	INSURANCE	MEDIA	MINING	MOTOR VEHICLES
Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50

PHARMACEUTICALS	PRINTING & PAPER	PROPERTY	TELECOMMUNICATIONS	TRANSPORT	WATER
Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50

RETAILERS GENERAL	RETAILERS FOOD	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET
Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50	Asahi Breweries Ltd 120.00 +0.50

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Handwritten text in a box at the top center, possibly a date or reference number.

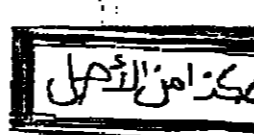
Source: FT Information. * Price in pence. † Ex-dividend. ‡ Ex-rights. § In the final column, the number of shares held by the company is given. ¶ In the final column, the number of shares held by the company is given.

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Main table containing unit trust prices, organized into columns with headers like 'Fund Name', 'Unit Price', 'Change', etc. Includes various fund categories such as Equity, Bond, and Money Market.

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Richard Cork on three exhibitions celebrating the photographic genius of the 90-year-old Henri Cartier-Bresson

Panoramic view of a people person

Feted with 90th birthday celebrations in major exhibition spaces right across London, Henri Cartier-Bresson's work survives the test with a masterful display of Gallic sang-froid. At the Hayward Gallery, his 182-print survey of Europe amply justifies his reputation as the finest living photographer. Another substantial offering, this time focusing on 120 of his most outstanding portraits, is being presented at the National Portrait Gallery. And now, a Royal College of Art survey has revealed the least-known of his achievements: 150 drawings, mostly produced since he made the audacious decision to put aside his camera and, at the age of 65, take up the pencil instead.

At first disconcerting, this change of medium is more understandable than it might appear. For Cartier-Bresson trained as an artist in Paris, long before he learnt how to look through a viewfinder. One of the few paintings on view at the Royal College shows a female nude, reclining in the studio belonging to his teacher, André Lhote. It is a pleasant study, like most of his other surviving student works. But their modest level of achievement gives little hint of the vision Cartier-Bresson was to show in his photography.

His discovery of the camera occurred, significantly enough, after he spent a year in Africa working as a hunter. Exhausted by a severe attack of blackwater fever that forced him to return home, he took a camera to the South of France and started shooting. This time, killing was not involved. But many of Cartier-Bresson's best photographs depend on his ability to stalk, wait, aim and press the trigger at precisely the right second.

Not that his art training proved irrelevant. Despite their inspired reliance on chance and the snatched moment, many of his early European pictures show a sophisticated feeling for composition. When he catches a small Roman girl at the instant of running into a rectangle of Mediterranean sunlight, all his attention might seem to be concentrated on the figure alone. But the multi-angled play of shadows around her, no less than the tilted buildings massed beside her and above, all contribute to the pictorial vitality of this carefully calculated image. Copies of Old Master paintings are included in the Royal College show, and they testify to a lifetime of learning from the art of the past.

As a photographer, though, Cartier-Bresson was equally alive to the avant-garde. Looking down a spiralling staircase at Elysees in 1932, he defined the dynamism of steps and iron railings with an eye sharpened by geometric abstraction. But he paused until a man cycled past on the cobbled street below, and his blurred figure prevents the picture from divorcing itself too radically from the everyday world. Cartier-Bresson was far too involved with humanity to become an Abstractionist. He may have delighted in the formal play of

circles, oblongs and arcs outlined by floating debris on the flooded Pont de l'Europe. But the image is dominated by a silhouette of a leaping pedestrian, his fuzzy reflection dramatically isolated in the water.

Even when people play a diminutive role in his photographs, they are far from incidental. A view of the Tuileries Gardens in 1969 seems to be given over entirely to stripped winter trees, standing motionlessly to attention in long, martial rows. But then, far away, we notice a distant couple, captured as they move across the intersection of two broad avenues. However insignificant they may seem, their presence transforms the picture.

Cartier-Bresson's ability to capture the fugitive moment and give it unforgettable permanence lies at the core of his work. Nobody is more conscious of flux, and in a

all its cragginess, Cartier-Bresson shoots him against a door even more guarded and weathered than his own skin.

The most memorable portraits on view here usually show the subjects in contexts that enhance their meaning. Jean-Paul Sartre, his fur-lined coat buttressing him against a Parisian winter, looks as alone as he broods on a melancholy Existential bridge. Samuel Beckett, his hawk's eyes trained fiercely downwards, is juxtaposed with an aggressive lump pointing up at his bookshelves. Tony Hancock, trampled and sulky, sits hunched on some steep stairs with a finger jammed childishly against his mouth. Marcel Duchamp, waving a cigar in the air, lounges roguishly beside the bicycle wheel he had nominated as a work of art more than half a century before.

Some of the portraits — Harold Macmillan and Cecil Beaton among them — are disappointingly bland and unexceptional. Maybe Cartier-Bresson was defeated by their English reserve. He abhors formality, preferring whenever possible to let people forget the presence of the camera. Then, invariably with artists as his subjects, the outcome can be magnificent. Bonnard standing in his cold studio, a scarf wound tightly round his neck, gazes glumly at the light and kneads his large, knobby hands with undisguised anxiety. He could scarcely be more at variance with the round equanimity of Matisse, encircled by bird-cages and leaning back in a chair as he sketches the plump dove held in his grip.

Above all, though, the arch-chameleon Picasso is caught in two utterly different moods. The first, taken in 1944 when he was trapped in occupied Paris and painting his bleakest pictures, shows him in surprisingly jovial guise. Half-naked in a bedroom cluttered with clothes, primus, books and brushes, he shows off his expansive torso with shameless machismo.

In the later portrait, though, all that bravado has vanished. The octogenarian artist frowns as he stares in the direction of the lens. His dark eyes are still alert, concentrated and penetrating. Dressed in a simple white shirt, he no longer indulges in his old love of exhibitionism. Even his gaze appears, finally, to be directed inwards rather than at the camera. He has the look of an old man confronting his mortality, just as he does in some of his own late self-portraits.

Picasso does not flinch, and he gives no sign of evasion. But there is anger in his eyes, as well as despondency. His face looks slightly blurred, as if affected already by the dissolution he sees ahead of him. It is the most truthful and revealing photograph of Picasso I have ever seen, the work of a tireless and patient hunter who knows exactly when to pounce.

Europeans at the Hayward Gallery (0171-261 0127) until April 5; The Art Now at the National Portrait Gallery (0171-306 0053) until June 7; Line by Line at the Royal College of Art (0171-590 4444) until April 9.

‘He is a tireless hunter who knows exactly when to pounce’

1933 aerial shot of Siena the shadows seem to move further over the piazza as we ponder this bold, dream-like image. Its air of silent expectancy suggests that he owed a debt to de Chirico's paintings of similar scenes. But figures can also be detected in the Siena picture, making their minuscule way across the emptiness. They look isolated and vulnerable enough to explain why Cartier-Bresson should admire Giacometti so much: the latter's bronze piazzas, inhabited only by a few attenuated figures walking or held spellbound, explore related areas of feeling.

Although he is not identified by name, Giacometti himself appears in the middle distance of one Hayward Gallery photograph. Caught with a raised foot, as he negotiates a narrow pathway between ancient houses at Stampa in Switzerland, he turns to acknowledge the camera's presence. Cartier-Bresson may have asked him to walk there: the composition is an impeccably calculated affair, filled with angular shadows scything through smilt patches and the diagonal forms of projecting timbered roofs. By glancing at the lens, Giacometti seems to be implying that he understands the photographer's intentions. And some of the swiftly executed, unpretentious pencil portraits and landscapes at the Royal College indicate that Cartier-Bresson has been influenced, in turn, by Giacometti's own spidery drawings.

The sculptor reappears in the National Portrait Gallery exhibition, this time in images where his deeply furrowed face is explored in



The most memorable portraits usually show the subjects in contexts that enhance their meaning; thus Jean-Paul Sartre on an Existential bridge

AROUND THE LONDON GALLERIES

THE young American artist Amy Adler is no relation of the psychologist Alfred Adler, but she draws on the resonances of their shared surname in the title of her first London show, *The Problem Child*. The six black-and-white portraits that make up this multi-part piece could almost be a set of illustrations from a psychological text.

Taken individually, each picture appears little more than a nostalgic portrait of adolescence. Each shows a boy engaged in the sort of pastimes that any young teenager might engage in: shooting marbles, reading a schoolbook, larking around. But seen together they raise questions. Who are these boys? What do they share? How will they develop? And is it sadness that you can see in their eyes?

There are no ready answers to be found in *The Problem Child*. A sense of displacement, of uneasy detachment, slowly gathers in the viewer. This is echoed by Adler's technique. The pictures are photographs of (now defunct) pastel drawings that

Adler made of photographs which she found in the first place. The children they show are trapped in a limbo of reproduction.

Charles Saatchi bought up this whole show on its opening night. Adler is obviously an artist to watch.

Amy Adler: *The Problem Child* is on show at the Entwistle Gallery, 6 Cork Street, London W1 (0171-734 6440) until April 9.

THE installation *Any Object in the Universe*, the thirteenth in the Tate's Art Now programme, also explores themes of identity and displacement. The artist Graham Gussin has taken his inspiration from a haunting story by Edgar Allan Poe, *A Tale of the Ragged Mountains*, in which illusion seeps inside reality and truth and hallucination become disturbingly confused.

Slipping along a narrow dimly lit corridor, the viewer enters a gloomy, echoing room. A projection fills one of the walls. It is an image of the room in which you are standing but it is empty, save for a microphone on a stand. As the

visitor moves about the sound-sensitive floor every step is electronically magnified. It reverberates, eerily, but not from where the visitor is standing: it echoes in the empty, illusory chamber. Presence is marked where there is only absence.

This is a baffling piece. For the full effect, perhaps you should go with a tap dancer to see it.

Art Now 13: Graham Gussin is at the Tate Gallery, Millbank London SW1 (0171-837 8000) until April 26.

AS SHE cycles around London, Sarah Holliday sees a city in a state of flux. Whenever a building has been knocked down, she says, it leaves a trace behind, sometimes visible, sometimes just a feeling. It is this nebulous memory of lingering ghosts that she tries to distil in her watercolours.

Her delicate architectural studies, with their soft rich light and muted tones, drift between precision and abstraction. Nothing is ever fully explained. Rather, Holliday captures the moment of formation, the geometric formality of a builder's scaffolding, the workman's plastic sheeting billowing over a facade.

Even as these paintings are completed, their subjects have changed. Something new has emerged in their place. But for any Londoner who is fascinated by the facades of the city in which they live, by the forgotten corners of scruffy streets and by the fingerprints which history leaves everywhere behind, this exhibition will be full of discovery as well as nostalgia.

Sarah Holliday: London Unveiled is at the New Academy Gallery, 34 Windmill Street, London W1 (0171-323 4700) until March 28.

RACHEL CAMPBELL-JOHNSTON



nebulous memory of lingering ghosts — the watercolourist Sarah Holliday's painting *Old Wall, Butler's Wharf*

Echoes from a distant war zone

CONCERTS

Apart from being important Central European composers and fairly bad box office, Haydn and Bartók might seem to have little in common. Yet the three pieces in the latest instalment of Christoph von Dohnányi's imaginative Haydn-Bartók Festival Hall series with the Philharmonia made perfect sense together: neither composer works well unless the performance seeks out what is hidden behind the notes.

Sunday's programme featured a piece by each composer written during wartime. Haydn's *Nelson Mass* is one of the composer's six late masses that reflect turmoil in Europe at the end of the 18th century. The final plea for peace has a special urgency that was not lost here.

Dohnányi's full-blooded approach did not mean that the rhapsodies were any less tightly sprung than in a 'period' performance. He was backed

by rich singing from the Philharmonia Chorus, rigorously drilled for the last time by David Hill. Some slipped intonation apart, Susan Gritton soared through the soprano solos and led a well-balanced quartet (the outstanding Ruby Philogene, Toby Spence and Neal Davies).

Bartók's *Divertimento* for strings was composed in 1940, and its slow movement is an eloquent lament. Yet much of the music has Haydn-esque grace. Dohnányi shaped a performance that was both fluid and disciplined. He showed the same control in the

suite from *The Miraculous Mandarin*. For once this score sounded like the dance music it is. That made the performance electrifying.

JOHN ALLISON

The Takács Quartet have come comparatively late to Janáček, and the excitement of their discovery is still vivid. They plan to record the composer's two quartets: their live Wigmore Hall performance made one both impatient for the results and aware that the searing heat of the performance in the process of its forging may never quite be recaptured.

On Friday, they chose Janáček's last quartet, composed in 1928 just as he was finishing his dark Dostoevsky opera, *From the House of the Dead*, and only six months before his own death. The intense compassion for humanity in that opera is answered in the quartet, *Intimate Letters*, by a vibrant personal passion: that for the late-flowering love of his life, Kamilla Stösslová.

The Takács took it in their long, confident stride, while never disguising the physical struggle and elation which is at one here with the spiritual. At those moments when Janáček seems to be working on two or three emotional planes at once, the players found a powerful sense of balance. And where the first violin soars to extremes of rapture,

Edward Dusinberre's own bright, ripe tone rose to a feverish brilliance.

That same bright leading light had sharply defined the Mozart *Hoffmeister Quartet* with which the evening had begun. After the Janáček came Beethoven's third *Razumovsky Quartet*, and an extraordinary tour de force of collaborative virtuosity. Beethoven had written over the fugue finale, as if to himself: "Make no secret of your deafness, not even in Art." And, as if fired and fortified by Janáček's great final confession, the Takács fought their way through to a most powerfully achieved vindication of the triumph of the human spirit.

HILARY FINCH

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BUILDING A LIBRARY

A guide to the best available classical recordings on CD, presented in conjunction with BBC Radio 3

VERDI'S LA TRAVIATA Reviewed by Michael Oliver
VERDI'S *La Traviata* notoriously failed to please at its first performance in Venice in 1853. The frail, consumptive heroine Violetta was sung by the plump and homely Fanny Salvini-Donatelli (not Verdi's choice) and her death scene was greeted with laughter. A year later, in the same city but with a small-voiced wait of a soprano, Maria Spezia, the opera triumphed and it has remained at the centre of the repertoire ever since.

There are about 30 recordings available at present, but choice between them is not as difficult as it might suggest. First, it is the soprano's opera: if the Violetta is moving and convincing, most listeners

would be prepared to put up with a less than ideal tenor or baritone. Secondly, less than a third of the available recordings are complete: conventional cuts are still being made.

For many listeners the Violetta, incomparably moving, making every word and note come to life, is Maria Callas. Both her recordings are live and in poor-quality sound. The better of the two is of a performance in Lisbon in 1958. The finest post-Callas Violetta is probably Ileana Cotrubas, who recorded the role with ideal colleagues

(Plácido Domingo and Sherrill Milnes) under the vivid and sensitive direction of Carlos Kleiber in 1977. For a complete recording, choice lies between Riccardo Muti's first recording and Sir Georg Solti's. Solti and today's reigning Violetta, Angela Gheorghiu, deliver a subtle and moving performance. But Muti's 1982 recording has a more consistently fine cast (Renata Scotta, Alfredo Kraus and Renato Bruson) and is even more subtly responsive to Verdi's instructions (EMI CDS 7 47538-8-SIS, £32.99).

To order the recommended recording, with free delivery, please send a cheque payable to The Times Music Shop to FREEPOST, SCO681, Forbes, IV36 0BR or phone 0345 023 498; e-mail: music@the-times.co.uk. Next Saturday on Radio 3 (9am): Schumann's *Humoreske in B flat, Op 20*

Have wheels, will trouble.



Road rage: Lizzy McInnerny and Lloyd Hutchinson steer Steve Waters's powerful new play along life's highways

Since last May nothing that's new can be left for ourselves but must have a great big NEW stuck in front of it.

English Journeys Hampstead

action occurs in the front seats of cars criss-crossing England. So this is new both in idea, direction, and perspectives.

The play opens as she drives westward, managing not to fall asleep at the wheel by articulating a cataract of thoughts about her husband, young baby, discontent, discontent with being discontent.

both their cars should be left-hand drive, unless to distinguish present from past journeys, when a younger Kathy and Peter are in a car together. Here the driving-wheel is on the usual side but it is a small advantage for a large distraction.

Pregnant and heavy

It is here that Barbara Ewing's superbly unhinged Eileen takes on all the trappings of the Annie Wilkes character in Stephen King's novel Misery.

EVER since Demi Moore appeared naked and with child on the cover of Vanity Fair, exposing one's pregnancy in public has become fashionable.

Slav laboured

THERE are two entirely unrelated temptresses with the same exotic name haunting the London fringe.

What makes this manipulation so enjoyable is the quirky comedy Chadwick extracts from the situation. When Elinor's mother arrives like a gaudy divorcee from a Noel Coward play, there is a wonderful stretch where Elinor's feigned innocence is at war with her real self.

Chin tilted up, arms akimbo, fingers pinching thin air, and mimicking the deep Slavic vowels of her flatmate.

Chin tilted up, arms akimbo, fingers pinching thin air, and mimicking the deep Slavic vowels of her flatmate. Sandra's wildly romanticised alter ego is begging to be flattened by a train.

LONDON

KRAPP'S LAST TAPE: Edward Petherbridge gives new performance only of Beckett's one-act drama of Jewish desecration and regret.

CHAMBER MUSIC: A formidable double-act can be enjoyed tonight as the schoolboy Schatz and the pianist Titi Felber get together for the first of two concerts.

TALLIS SCHOLARS: The concertly excellent choral group under its conductor Peter Phillips gives a concert of 16th-century Continental music.

WAITING FOR GODOT: The Peter Hall Company bores back, reopening with its Old Vic success, and the pained Titi Felber get together for the first of two concerts.

AMMY'S VIEW: Judi Dench and Samantha Bond play mother and daughter in David Hare's moving drama of love, ambition, resentment and the hazards of contemporary life.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Disney's film turned into a hit Broadway musical. Julie-Anne Bagnall and Alisdair Harvey as the leads.

THE DAY I STOOD STILL: Impressive new Kevin Egan play about the paralyzing effect of unrequited (gay) love.

THE DEAD MONKEY: David "Hutch" Soul plays the Californian ex-servant in a revival of Nick Barltrop's comedy of the love between a man, a woman and a monkey.

HENRY VIII: Paul Jesson, Jane Lapotaite, Ian Hogg in longish but strongly played and carefully staged history of Henry VIII's marriages.

TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Marti Margie

the life role, with Philip Evans as the cool conductor Andrew Linton, music director of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra.



Heinrich Schiff plays Beethoven, the Wigmore

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of the theatre scene in London

HOUSE FULL, returns only

AM YOURS: British premiere for Canadian Justin Thompson's play about two sisters.

AN IDEAL HUSBAND: Now in its fifth London season, Peter Hall's comedy in the London music hall tradition.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION: Edward Fox and Claire Higgins play Harold Macmillan and Lady Dorothy in a comedy of the love between a man, a woman and a monkey.

NORMAL HEART: Revival of Larry Kramer's amusing drama, the first AIDS play, directed by Richard Bridge.

LONDON GALLERIES

Annely Juda Fine Art: Anthony Caro - New Sculpture (1971-82) 7578

Barbican Centre: The Art of Calligraphy (1771-1981)

Delfino: Italy in the Age of Turin (1818-1835)

Richard III: Eddie Marsan plays the villainous hero in Guy Cregan's production, set in the East End of a gangsterland of the 1930s.

Long Runners: Comedy Theatre, Park Street, SW1 (0171-839 1721)

LA MAMAN ET LA PUTAIN (6): A young French man (Jean-Pierre L aud) explores his relationship with his mother.

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NEW RELEASES

UN AIR DE FAMILLE (15): Agreeable French comedy-drama about a squabbling family gathered for a birthday.

CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and beyond (indicated with the symbol Ⓢ on release across the country)

CURRENT

AMSTAD (15): African slaves captured by the Dutch in 1639 and are used for murder.

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Donald Hutera meets New York choreographer Bill T. Jones as he prepares for a London season. Plus, Richard Alston reviewed

Time to tell a different story

Words roll out of Bill T. Jones's mouth the way movement rolls off his body: silky smooth, full of graceful, quirky precision and flashes of force. Since he began making dances in the early 1970s, the charismatic American choreographer has fashioned a career out of using speech and, especially, flesh to give his personal take on what it means to be alive.

"We Set Out Early..." Jones slowly pronounces the title of his latest full-length dance, which comes to the Peacock Theatre next week. "... Visibility Was Poor. It sounds like the beginning of a novel, doesn't it?"

It is a bitterly cold January night in Bologna, Italy, the kind of weather conducive to curling up in a warm place with a good book. Although Jones, 57, is meant to be resting backstage before his company's performance at the Arena del Sole, he is, as ever, prepared to talk. Patient, yet zealous, he sounds like a cross between a lecturer, a storyteller and a preacher.

"I chose a narrative title as a kind of tease," Jones says with a sly grin. "Yes, there had been times in the past when I have done monologues, had characters, made references to literature. And in dance, there's always a story. But it doesn't have to proceed in a linear fashion.

"This piece proceeds by the laws of dance. It's almost purely dance material. It's about rhythm, space, design, and the way the body organises itself."

It wasn't such formalist impulses that drew widespread attention to Jones's two previous full-length shows. Made in 1990, *Last Supper At Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land* was a controversial and deliberately fragmented saga of racism, sexuality and faith that found inspiration in, among others, Leonardo da Vinci, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Martin Luther King. Combining the sweep of opera with the impact of political statement, it was a cascade of theatrically powerful images of humiliation.

sacrifice, oppression and, ultimately, redemption. The Vatican was outraged.

Jones's 1994 follow-up, *Still/Here*, kick-started one of the decade's most virulent artistic debates. Culled from workshops conducted with people coping with life-threatening illnesses, the two-part production maintained a beautifully mature, clear-eyed balance between the spiritual and the corporeal.

Not that influential American dance critic Arlene Croce saw it that way. In fact, she didn't see it at all. Instead, in a blistering essay in *The New Yorker* magazine, Croce branded Jones's work "victim art", and judged it impossible to review because of the degree to which it begged her sympathy.

While the criticism hurt and offended Jones, it didn't hamper his restless creativity. He makes dances now with the same urgency and depth of feeling that have marked his work ever since the Aids-related death of his lover, the dancer-choreographer Arnie Zane, ten years ago. Jones is probably aware that, with its air of abstract mystery and seamless choreographic eclecticism, *We Set Out Early...* is unlikely to inspire the clamour its predecessors did. But for him it is the biggest step yet in a new aesthetic direction.

"The works of the past few years have been about things easy to talk about outside the dance," he says. "The challenge of facing mortality, identity issues: these are things you could have a lively discussion about with almost anyone."

The shift away from in-your-face polemics has been gradual. "I was thinking about making another big work and went through my catalogue of ideas to be developed. Some are fragments of movement, some musical ideas, others decor notions. What I had was a title based in 'we', something epic that suggests a very open-ended sense of a journey."

It was music that offered structure and itinerary. *We Set Out Early...* is an evocative, though purposefully non-specific, trip through the

moods and upheavals of the 20th century. It segues from 1917 (via a suite version of Igor Stravinsky's *A Soldier's Tale*) to the mid-1950s (a selection of three John Cage scores for piano, voice and silence) to 1991 (a turbulently lyrical, cathartic string symphony by Latvian composer Peteris Vasks). Robert Wierzel's sensitive lighting and emblematic set-pieces by Jones's partner of five years, Eijon American, also contribute to the piece's strong, though enigmatic atmosphere.

"I'm not so interested in naturalism right now," Jones admits. "I'm making a brand of theatre which invites you in to dream, to contemplate, to feel emotion. To do that I am relying less on scenario. The theme is in the movement, the rhythm of the hips, the shoulders, the way you stand and who stands with you."

Jones's current preferred working method entails putting on music in the studio and videotaping his improvisations — "one-man marathons," he calls them. "You can get very detailed rhythmic sequences that you never would if you were thinking about it. And you don't have to remember it, because the camera captures it all."

Afterwards, in what Jones hails as a revolutionary approach to his choreography, he and the rehearsal director, Janet Wong, extract the movement they feel works best and filter it through the dancers' bodies and sensibilities. "But recreating it can be hard. You find you had five things going on in the body at once. When comes first? It's not always clear."

"I am very much into a — I don't want to say 'cerebral' approach, but I do think more about how I move than in the past, and about the level of metaphor and social stuff on the stage. I make more choices about all of that, so that in the end the work can suggest a version of us — of a 'we'."

© The Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company is at the Peacock Theatre, London (0171-314 8800), March 17-21



Bill T. Jones: "I'm making a brand of theatre which invites you in to dream, to contemplate, to feel emotion"

Sketches twinned with wit

OWEN EVANS and Carl Minns, known collectively as the Nimmo Twins, do cruel things to words. They mock phraseology and torture intonation for kicks. In their world of fast-moving sketch comedy, nothing is sacred: even the litany of the shipping forecast becomes the account of a man's night out with his wife, and their "moderate to poor" sexual activity. Most of the Nimmo Twins sketches operate by taking a very distinctive style of communication and placing it in an inappropriate context. Thus we have three sets of couples who take their work home with them. For the local radio advertising couple, supper is "the taste of New Delhi in front of your

COMEDY The Nimmo Twins Hen and Chickens, N1

telly"; the newscasters get "PLO: peas, leeks and onions; led by Asda Marrowfat"; and the MPs are too busy arguing about the first reading of the bills to eat anything at all. Eventually Mrs MP is questioned about her relationship with the small businessman. Mrs Local Radio Advertiser extols the virtues of the hunky young builder next door with whom "the customer always comes first", and Mrs Newscaster announces that she is "screwed at ten, 7.20 and a quarter to nine".

All three scenarios are beautifully sustained, but the fact that there are three of them points to a basic problem with the Nimmos' current show: they have hit on such a brilliant technique that they tend to overuse it. Not only do we have a football commentator working for the Cambridge Examination Board, giving the results for Eton v Hackney Grammar, we also have commentators analysing the match at Dumstiane Castle. As the occasional joke or character reappears, the material wears a little thin.

It is a shame to cavil, because when the Nimmo Twins hit the mark, they do so with genius; without doubt they are on the brink of something very exciting indeed. At their best, such as the sketch of the zoologist examining the activity at a "... and Firkin" pub, they not only indulge their brilliant language skills, but also pass well-observed comment on the clichés of contemporary life. Even when presenting groan-worthy puns, their intelligence shines through. Radio 4 should snap them up.

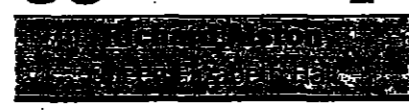
HETTIE JUDAH

Richly suggestive, purely told

Some choreographers need a plot, some need a prop, and still others need a platform for psychoanalysis and politicking. But all Richard Alston needs is a good score and a great group of dancers to get him going. And at the Queen Elizabeth Hall last week he had both.

The music was *Red Run*: nine songs for 11 musicians, written in 1988 by Heiner Goebbels for the choreographer Amanda Miller. Alston took the shorter, tighter concert version as his chosen score when he was commissioned to make a new piece for the 1998 Holland Dance Festival. Its performances on the South Bank marked its British premiere.

In a programme note Alston describes the music thus: "Harsh sometimes aggressive bursts of upbeat jazz rhythm get repeatedly pushed aside by a sense of foreboding or by keening lament." That is just the kind of rich suggestiveness Alston loves, a place where shadows and secrets lie in wait.



Red Run the dance is not a literal realisation of the music, but an all-embracing atmosphere that absorbs the spirit and mood of Goebbels's electro-acoustic score. The choreography sets up a garrulous dialogue with the music, posing tantalising questions and devising playful and frantic answers.

At times the six dancers seem to be cutting their way through a dense undergrowth, or wading heavily through a great soup of mist. But then the music changes, and a vivacious violin sets the dance off into spry phrases, or a laid-back trumpet prompts the dancers to grind to a halt. Long drawn-out phrases are suddenly stopped dead, movement is thinned out and then pumped up in size and speed. This is dance in its purest sense: bodies without overtones, partnerships without

agendas, incidents without context. Who needs props and plots when you can have choreography as good as this?

Thanks to the South Bank's continuing relationship with the London Sinfonietta, the dancers — and the audience — had the benefit of hearing the Goebbels score played live. Alston and the Sinfonietta have worked together before — on a Birrville project in 1996 — and it is a marriage made in heaven. The Sinfonietta, conducted by Nicholas Kok, played brilliantly. And when *Red Run* was followed by *Rumours, Visions*, and all we got was a recording of Britten's *Les Illuminations*, it became all the more obvious what a tremendous impact live music has on dance.

Alston launched his troupe in 1994 and it has taken three seasons for the dancers to find themselves in his choreography. They now look more fluid and muscular than ever. Alston must be pleased.

DEBRA CRAINE

Launching no more offensives

POP

Suicide have always provoked extreme reactions. When singer Alan Vega and synthesizer player Martin Rev first toured Europe in 1978, their experimental noise-fest frequently caused audiences to hurl shoes, beer cans and chairs at the stage. Even though *Suicide* were afforded "legendary" status in the mid-Eighties, when a new generation of bands began to cite them as an influence, Vega failed to lose his incendiary touch — provoking an almost hysterical barrage of physical and verbal abuse when he supported Pop Will Eat Itself in London in 1990.

However, all that seemed a long way behind *Suicide* as they began a four-night stint at the Garage — their first proper

London concerts in ten years — with a different celebrity DJ for each show. On Saturday it was the turn of Pulp singer Jarvis Cocker, whose stage moves owe at least something to Vega's exaggerated sense of camp. The passing years, and various advances in technology, seem to have made little difference to *Suicide*. The duo were dressed, as always, in black — Vega's features obscured by matching shades, his customary beret and a haze of cigarette smoke — and it was easy to see why their deafening racket might once have been deemed so offensive. This time round, though, there was hushed reverence for the new material and shouts of recognition for old favourites from their debut

1978 album *Suicide* which is being reissued this week. The climax of their 45-minute set was *Jukebox Baby*, where Vega became the human jukebox of the title by incorporating snatches of ? & The Mysterians' 96 Tears, the Stooges' *I Wanna Be Your Dog* and the Velvet Underground's *Sister Ray*.

"We are family," he said at the end, his arms wide open to embrace the crowd. They returned to play their signature tune *Ghost Rider* before a black curtain fell and Jarvis Cocker cued up Sano & Johnny's *Sleep Walk* — an old record which, much like *Suicide*, is now considered a classic.

ANN SCANLON

an uplifting evening in which egos, petty jealousies and political rivalries were set aside in the interests of music that transcended all barriers.

Khumalo's Zulu lullaby *Tula* was augmented by Hanira's gentle Malagasy chants. Sangare's song of homesteadness, *Andia*, was made more poignant by the addition of the gentle sway of township jazz. Nyolo's tribal cappella was enhanced by the coherance of voices from three other cultures.

Rarely can such diverse artists have created such a warm and generous empathy. This was a vivid and unique celebration of pan-African magic.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Chemistry sets

additionally appropriate.

Oumou Sangare from landlocked Mali is West Africa's richest female star. Hanira Rasoanaivo comes from Madagascar and leads the band *Tarika*. Sally Nyolo is from Cameroon and used to sing with Zap Mama before embarking on a solo career. The South African diva Sibongile Khumalo hails from the Soweto township.

Western attitudes tend to group African cultures together, and indeed as women all four share a common struggle against patriarchal societies. Yet this evening also showcased backgrounds and expe-



riences as richly varied as you would find among any similar group of European women drawn from, say, Turkey, Spain, Sweden and Ireland. The organisers had expected that all four would perform separate sets and then come together for a final celebration of collective unity. It didn't work out like that. Such was the chemistry between the four that they decided to pool their talents for virtually the entire two-hour show. The result was

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The Hollywood Playhouse series includes a sensational double bill, *Casablanca* and *The Maltese Falcon*, both performed for radio by Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. Bogart also stars in adaptations of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* and *The African Queen*.

Orson Welles and Laurence Olivier feature in a recreation of *Beau Geste*. Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert re-enact their film roles in the romantic comedy *It Happened One Night*. Also in the series are *Sunset Boulevard*, with Gloria Swanson and William Holden, and the classic western, *Shane*, with Alan Ladd and Van Heflin in their original film roles.

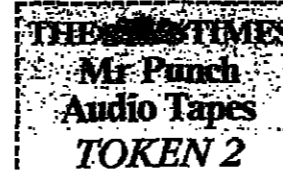
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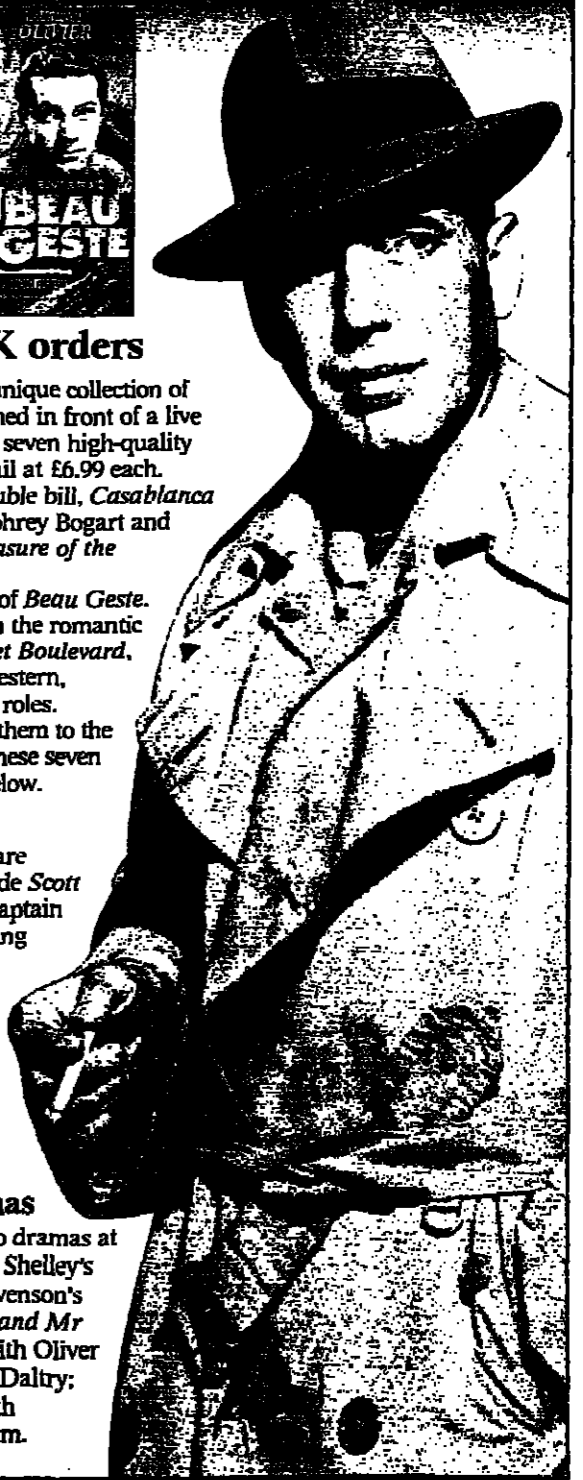
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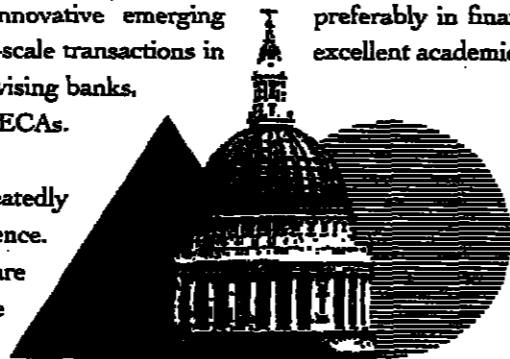
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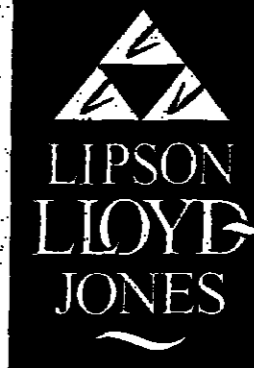
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LAW

COMPUTER EVIDENCE 43
LAW REPORT 22

Geoffrey Robertson, QC, recalls a legal master at work in a famous obscenity trial

Thumbs up for a great act

The outcome of a criminal trial does, occasionally, turn on the barrister's performance. The most memorable example I witnessed came in Court No 1 at the Old Bailey during the trial of a theatre director on the charge of procuring an act of gross indecency.



Under occupation: Druids face their would-be masters in The Romans in Britain

Our task was not easy. The "gross indecency" law - Section 13 of the Sexual Offences Act - applies only to males, usually those who masturbate in "public places" such as parks or toilets. But for the purposes of this statute, the National Theatre was no different from a public toilet (architecturally, it resembles one) and Michael Bogdanov was, providentially, a male (had the play been directed by Michelle Bogdanov, the case could not have been brought).

can you - swear on oath to his Lordship and to the jury that you are certain you saw the tip of a penis from a distance of 90 yards from the stage? Mr Ross-Cornes was shaken, but not stirred. That was achieved by the most daring piece of impromptu cross-examination I have ever witnessed.

the back row of the gods. Soon afterwards, the prosecution was withdrawn, with costs (which would pay for two new productions) awarded to the National Theatre.

Look who's flouting the Bar code

The chambers of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, QC, at 11 Kings Bench Walk is flouting the Bar code of conduct - and that's official. The sin of the chambers is to describe itself as a "leading set".

Chancellor's Department this week: It asks whether there should be changes to the law on how the courts in England and Wales determine paternity.

OUTS married fathers, such as those who register a child's birth jointly with the mother.

research and to find out how juries reached verdicts before deciding to scrap the jury system altogether.

Paternity change?

THE PROSPECT of greater rights for unmarried fathers is canvassed in a consultation paper published by the Lord



Lord Irvine in chambers

Jury danger RESEARCH into how juries conduct their work looks a long way off. In view of the Government's recent consultation paper on whether juries should be scrapped in fraud cases, Lord Borrie, QC, former Director-General of Fair Trading, asked the Government whether it would not be better to lift the ban on jury

A new unity SOUTH AFRICA'S lawyers of all races will be united into a single profession for the first time later this month with the creation of a new Law Society of South Africa.

Let the women in on the gossip

In the biggest robing room controversy since a county court judge fined a barrister for smoking there in 1925, a number of women barristers are submitting that the robing rooms at the Royal Courts of Justice in London should be made unisex. Such robing room advocacy deserves the support of all lawyers.



COUNSEL DAVID PANNICK QC

On a more regular basis, the robing room is where lawyers about to go into court learn the latest gossip about their colleagues and the judiciary. Barristers tentatively explore whether the interests of their respective clients might be better served by a compromise than by subjecting their dispute to trial by ordeal before one of Her Majesty's judges.

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There is a growing trend in US courts for computer-generated evidence, says Victoria McKee



A revolution waiting to happen here

Are computers poised to supplant the importance of live witnesses and eloquent advocacy? Experts claim that just three minutes of computer animation can influence a jury more than half an hour of brilliant oratory. "Demonstrative evidence," as it is known, is big business in America. Demonstrative evidence is most commonly used in civil cases in which complex concepts have to be clarified for juries. It can also be useful in criminal trials. This week's appeal in Boston, Massachusetts, against the conviction of Louise Woodward, the English au pair, is exactly the kind of trial in which sophisticated computer animations could be used.

Deanne Siemer, a Washington-based lawyer and the author of *Tangible Evidence* — the third edition of which was recently published by the National Institute for Trial Advocacy in the US — believes that computer graphics could have been used to demonstrate the effects of shaking on a baby's brain.

She says: "If the jury could have pictured the baby's skull, it would have been very useful." Richard Susskind, professor of law, an adviser to Lord Woolf on his civil justice reforms and a consultant on computers and the courts, adds: "It occurred to me at the time that the use of graphics would have presented more powerful images." And who knows what would have happened in the O.J. Simpson trial had computer animation shown whether his hand fitted into the glove, or his feet the Bruno Magli shoes?

Ms Siemer specialises in "long, difficult civil cases involving intellectual properties and slippery issues about complicated mechanisms that are difficult to explain in words". Hence, she began to develop

demonstrative evidence — evidence that transcends the written and spoken word still prevalent in British courts.

She says: "I came to London a couple of years ago to speak at a judges' conference on technology and the law. I brought all my American whiz-bang things — my touch-screens, my voice-activation and my computer animations — and a judge put up his hand and said that the real problem was when they introduced copiers. How do you deal with that?"

Professor Susskind, the author of *The Future of Law*, soon to be out in paperback (OUP, £13.99), says: "The main difference between the US and UK is often cultural rather than technical. But in the future it is unlikely that documents before courts here will be pure text... they will be multimedia. I think the judiciary here is now open to the use of technology — almost half use computers."

Julie Campbell, who runs Legal Video in Boston, Massachusetts, emphasises the importance of demonstrative evidence being produced by companies such as

hers that understand the rules of evidence, rather than by advertising or computer graphics companies, as is sometimes the case.

"It has to be objective," she says. "Ours is one of a handful of reputable specialist firms. Some people try to get their demonstrative evidence from people who make wedding videos."

Ms Campbell can testify in court about the objectivity of her company's work, which is carefully designed to reflect the reality of the situation rather than a client's whim. "If we're asked to do, say, a video or animated reconstruction of an accident and it doesn't turn out the way our client wants it to, that's too bad," she says. "He doesn't have to show it in court, but we won't twist the truth."

Yet she specialises in heartrending "day in the life" videos of personal injury cases such as that of Eugene Doran, a healthy man until he was paralysed while sitting in a barber's chair by a nail from a nail

gun being used by a contractor on the other side of the wall. In 1988 he won a record \$15.3 million (about £10 million), largely because of the powerful evidence Ms Campbell produced.

Ms Siemer says: "If you have a really good orator [sic] versus a dreadful one, you can level the playing field with demonstrative evidence. It can succeed against the slickest advocate." But if you have a slick advocate such as Barry Scheck — who appeared in the Simpson and Woodward trials — using state-of-the-art animations, where will that lead?

"God help us if lawyers like Barry Scheck start producing demonstrative evidence," says Ms Campbell. Ms Siemer looks forward to "duels between animations — with the animation being a witness in itself". She reveals in the idea of "cross-examining" a computer animation.

"You have to get the animation from the other side, then present your case through their animation — melding your files with their files while cross-examining," she says, enthusiastically. "It's an emerging field, and must be dealt with correctly, according to rules of evidence."

"Normally," she says, "when you have duelling experts, the jurors do not have the technical expertise to decide between them, so they go for who they like the best or who they think the judge likes the best. With animations, they think they're making up their own minds — and that is extremely powerful."

For enthusiasts and those who fear that the truth may get lost somewhere along the way, the National Institute for Trial Advocacy is holding a Courtroom of the Future conference at William and Mary Law School in Williamsburg, Virginia, in September. Details: NITTA, 1602 North Ironwood, South Bend, Indiana, USA 46635.

Making sense of the damages for disaster

When relatives of those killed or injured in the Hillsborough football stadium in 1989 sued Yorkshire police for the shock they had suffered, it led to fresh guidelines on when a person can claim damages caused by someone's negligence.

In what became the leading case of *Alcock v Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police*, the House of Lords rejected the relatives' claims but specified the circumstances as to when people could claim.

First, a close tie of love and affection with the person killed or injured. Secondly, closeness to the accident in time and space. Thirdly, direct perception of the accident rather than, for example, hearing about it from a friend. It was further recognised that special, more lenient, principles apply to rescuers.

In the Hillsborough litigation this meant that some relatives at the stadium who suffered psychiatric illness were able to obtain damages, as were police officers who carried out rescue work. But relatives who saw the tragedy unfold on television and later identified the bodies of loved ones at the stadium could not win compensation for their psychiatric illness.

In another case, a father suffered psychiatric illness on the death of his son three days after the boy was injured in a road accident. The father was unable to recover damages from the negligent driver. He had gone directly to the hospital and sat at his son's bedside for three days before his life-support system was switched off. He was unable to recover damages because he was not close enough in time and space to the accident. Had his son died within hours of arrival at the hospital, and the father had then seen his body, he would have been able to recover.

Today, in a report with an accompanying draft Bill, the Law Commission recommends legislation to reform the law. Responses to our consultation paper confirmed that distinctions of the kind made in the two cases above are regarded as insensitive and arbitrary. How, then, should the law be reformed?

At one extreme, it can be argued that because drawing a satisfactory line between liability and no-liability is so difficult in this area, all liability for psychiatric illness suffered as a result of another person's death or injury should be abolished. But only a tiny minority



Andrew Burrows, above, on the law and compensation for mental illness

supported this approach; it was thought out of keeping with medical understanding of psychiatric illness and that it would exclude many deserving cases.

Though some people are sceptical about whether psychiatric illness is "real", evidence indicates that it can have devastating effects on people. And to reiterate: we are not talking about mere mental distress. The plaintiff has to prove that he or she is suffering a recognisable psychiatric illness caused by the defendant's negligence. At the other extreme, all the special restrictions could be removed, so that liability for psychiatric illness would be brought into line with liability for physical injury. This was supported by many of those we on the commission consulted. But our review of the medical research into psychiatric illness led us to conclude that, at least at this stage in the law's development, some special restrictions on liability are necessary in order to avoid the risk of opening the floodgates of litigation.

We think the most rational and fairest way to limit liability is by reference to the relationship between the plaintiff and the person killed or injured. So we have recommended to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, that the restrictions based on closeness to the accident, and direct perception of it, should be removed; but that the requirement for a close tie of love and affection should in general be retained. We have also recommended that no specific reform is needed to the law on rescuers.

Our draft Bill provides a list of those relationships where there shall be deemed to be a close tie of love and affection between the plaintiff and the person killed or injured (spouse, parent, child, brother or sister, cohabitant) but also allows those not on the list to prove a close tie existed.

Our proposals would mean that a mother who can prove that she has suffered psychiatric illness as a result of seeing her son's sudden death, and a mother who can prove that she has suffered psychiatric illness as a result of watching her son slowly die in hospital, would both be entitled to damages from the negligent defendant responsible.

Professor Burrows is Professor of English Law at University College London, and a Law Commissioner for England and Wales. Liability for Psychiatric Illness, Law Commission Report No. 249 (Stationery Office, £16.35). The text of the report is available on the Internet at: <http://www.sps.gov.uk/lawcom98/>

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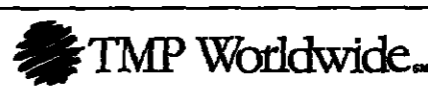
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CRICKET

Graveney's arrival revives debate on Atherton's role

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN BRIDGETOWN

WHILE the rest of England's Test match batsmen were taking modest advantage of an undemanding Barbados attack yesterday, Michael Atherton, the absent captain, was once again the centre of attention. No matter that he may yet lead his side to victory in the Test series, the latest speculation concerns his role in the decidedly secondary one-day series to follow.

David Graveney, the chairman of selectors, has rejoined the tour party to supervise the specialist one-day players arriving next week. His presence, allied to his previously acknowledged preference for Adam Hobbie as limited-overs captain, was sufficient to inspire another debate over the man who surely has the most unforgiving job in sport.

Having dithered so long, last autumn, over continuing as captain, Atherton was never blind to the personal hazards of this tour but probably imagined that his future would not become a daily issue once more, at least until the Test series was decided. Even that privilege is apparently denied.

Graveney gave a media conference yesterday and found himself pressed over whether Atherton might now stand down as one-day captain or even be excluded on form. Non-committal though he was, the impression remained that it would, in time, be a matter for discussion.

"We have options, because

Adam has been named as vice-captain," Graveney said. "I will assess the situation with Atherton when the time is right but there are still two Tests to come. I am optimistic that his form will return and it would be quite wrong to disturb the Test preparations by debating the one-day side."

Atherton devotes so much mental and physical energy to Test cricket that it would have been wise to excuse him in advance from the one-day cricket, at least so far as the leadership was concerned. It was on the insistence of two selectors, Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting, rather than any firm wish of his own, that he was given this entire tour in charge and the decision may soon be seen as misguided.

No man can endure indefinitely as captain of a losing England team, especially when short of runs himself, and the scrutiny of Atherton's every word and action has resumed in earnest. The Test match that starts on Thursday will be another examination of his character, the sort he habitually relishes.

Graveney defended his captain's decision to miss the three-day match that ended yesterday, saying: "If he wishes to prepare himself with decent net practice, I am perfectly happy." And, in truth, proceedings for those in action at Kensington Oval have been nothing more than glorified net practice.

The final day, watched at

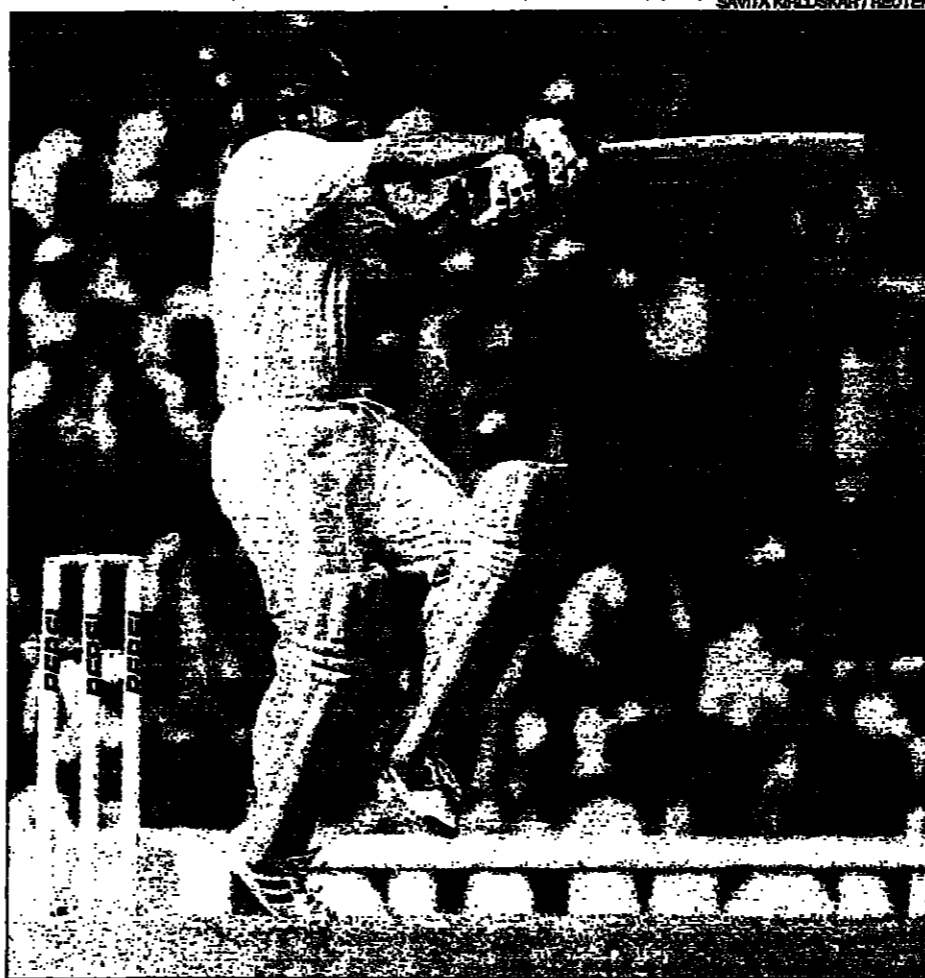
most exclusively by an advance guard of England supporters, meandered meaninglessly to stalemate, as was inevitable after the refusal of Barbados to make a challenging declaration. England set out to bat through the day and almost everyone relevant made some runs.

There were two areas of concern. Despite blissful batting conditions, nobody went on to make what would have been only the second England century on tour — the scores of the top six ranged from Ramprakash's 44 to Butcher's 79 — and Jack Russell fell again. He made only seven before falling to the erratic leg spin of Terry Rollock and his batting is increasingly negligible in his defence of the wicketkeeping position.

The most significant news of the day emerged from a meeting of the West Indies selectors, who decided to replace both their opening batsmen in an otherwise unchanged squad. Sherwin Campbell and Stuart Williams have been dropped after playing the last 14 Tests together, selectorial surgery easily justified by the lack of a single substantial first-wicket stand in the series to date.

England, however, may not be awed by those chosen instead. Clayton Lambert, the Guyanese left-hander, is 36 and played his only Test at the Oval seven years ago. Philo Wallace, the Barbados captain, made his debut against Pakistan in Rawalpindi late last year and has not been picked since. Both are compulsive aggressors, which should at least guarantee an improvement on the dire entertainment level of yesterday.

WEST INDIES (from): P A Wallace, C B Lambert, B C Lara (capt), S Chandernagore, C L Hooper, J C Adams, D Williams, I R Bishop, C E L Amrose, C A Walsh, D Ramnarine, R C Holder, N A McLean.



Tendulkar maintains the tempo with an aggressive pull in his innings of 155 not out

Tendulkar puts India on brink

AUSTRALIA yesterday experienced one of their worst days in Test cricket since England outplayed them at Edgbaston last June and are in grave danger today of losing the first Test to India in Madras (Simon Wilde writes). They lost three wickets in the final hour after India spent the day scoring freely before declaring at 418 for four and leaving them 348 to win.

Australia may be the unofficial world Test champions but they would gladly find room for Sachin Tendulkar had he been born in Brisbane and not Bombay. He outwitted their efforts at containment at every turn as he moved serenely — and sometimes violently — to an unbeaten 155 off 191 balls before Azharuddin called a halt.

"It is difficult to stop Sachin when he is in such an attacking mood," his captain said later. "There can be no doubt that he is the best batsman in the world. Most of his

innings from Steve Waugh, hundreds are brilliant." Unlike many of Tendulkar's Test centuries — of which there have been 15 in 59 matches — this one may be rewarded with victory, as Australia, after an exhausting day in the heat, quickly lost Slater, Blewett and Taylor.

Kumble dismissed Blewett with his first ball and Taylor with his tenth, the last of the day, and should be a key figure today.

It may require a major

inings from Steve Waugh, another of the world's best batsmen. If Australia are to escape, although India must bowl better at the tail than they did in the first innings.

Tendulkar, who hit 14 fours and four sixes, built on the good work done by Sidhu, who took the attack to Warne the previous evening. Warne conceded 79 runs from 22 overs yesterday despite bowling defensively from round the wicket.

MADRAS SCOREBOARD

Table with 2 columns: Team/Player and Score/Status. Includes India's first innings (257) and Australia's first innings (228).

Second collapse leaves Pakistan close to defeat

FROM IVO TENNANT IN PORT ELIZABETH

PORT ELIZABETH (fourth day of five): Pakistan, with three second-innings wickets to hand, need 224 runs to beat South Africa.

IN LEAVING Pakistan to score 394, more than any of their sides have managed to win a match, South Africa can hardly have envisaged that the touring team would fall so poorly for a second successive day. Three wickets remain for today, when only rain will prevent the inevitable outcome.

Pakistan would have had to surpass their achievement against Australia at Karachi in 1993, when they gained a memorable victory by making 315 for nine. It was, however, a prospect that there was scant chance of that. Indeed, a defeat in four days appeared to be their lot at one stage.

After playing with such discipline at Durban, Pakistan's batting here has been dismal. Dismissed on a deceit pitch for 106 in the first innings, they lost their first six wickets for 93 yesterday. Ijaz Hussain did not drop Inzamam-ul-Haq at third slip before he had scored and then Saeed Anwar, at deepish mid-wicket when on 31, there could well have been an early finish.

"We played the way South Africa's cricketers should play — aggressive and hard," Bob Woolmer, their coach, said. He would have liked, ideally, to have taken the lead to 420 before declaring — like everybody else, he is respectful of Pakistan's innate talents: Kalis, who scored 69, including seven fours, and Ackerman, who made 42, made sufficient runs before Waqar Younis took three wickets after lunch.

He is the one Pakistan cricketer who need not reproach himself, having finished with ten wickets in a Test for the fifth time. He was required to bat again last night, which will not have pleased him. His side was not helped by Amir Sobah having to go in down the order owing to injury, but the woe-

begone looks last night deserved no pity.

Ijaz Ahmed was leg-before to De Villiers through a poor defensive shot. Inzamam, who has had an unproductive series, achieved one scoring shot in 57 minutes before he made to drive at Adams and was neatly stumped by Boucher. The wicketkeeper is proving to be quite a find.

Moiz Khan was leg-before to a cleverly disguised slower ball from Donald, but Saeed Anwar, the one batsman to cope, reached a half-century before he drove extravagantly at Donald and was well held at first slip. Wasim Akram, promoted in spite of a lack of match practice, was taken at the wicket down the leg side. Rashid Latif, whose pair emphasised that he should not be in the side, was caught at gully off a ball that Adams turned considerably. Little remains for today.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard table with columns for Team, Player, and Score. Includes South Africa's first innings (293) and Pakistan's first innings (106).

BRIDGETOWN SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard table with columns for Team, Player, and Score. Includes Barbados' first innings (472) and England's first innings (52).

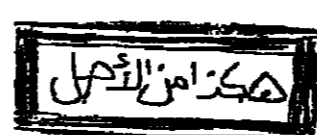
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FOOTBALL

Thompson appointed at Sheffield

By DAVID MADDOCK

STEVE THOMPSON has been confirmed as the manager of Sheffield United until the end of the season...

The feeling persists, however, that the board sees Thompson as a stop-gap until a more permanent successor can be found...

It had been widely expected that Spackman would return to the job but, after a six-hour board meeting...

The Manchester businessman, however, has remained in effective control of the club by retaining his chairmanship...

It seems that the new board, with Kevin McCabe as acting chairman, could still not meet Spackman's demands...

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Crewe build success on solid platform

David Maddock on a club that is a model for the discovery of talent

It is seven o'clock on a damp Cheshire evening. As the mist slips off the bland agricultural plains that isolate the town...

They will step on to the compact Gresty Road pitch in half an hour, exposed to 5,000 supporters. They are waiting for a team talk from their manager, but they will wait for a while yet because he is nowhere to be seen.

A familiar story perhaps, managers slipping away for a quiet scotch before 90 minutes of tension. But not Dario Gradi, the Crewe Alexandra manager. He has loftier diversions.

The manager is standing, still, in the middle of the Astroturf pitch behind the main stand, directing the demarcated traffic around him. He is coaching a bunch of eager nine-year-olds and is absorbed in the task.

This is life at Crewe. The first team is a focal point for an incredible success story, but Gradi knows that to maintain that success, he must channel as much of his great energy into the lifeblood of the club - its youth structure.

Today Crewe travel to Peterborough United in the fifth round of The Times FA Youth Cup. In some ways, Peterborough's achievement in reaching such an advanced stage is even more remarkable than that of their opponents, but there is no luck in Crewe's advancement.

Gradi knows that his tiny club survives because his dedicated staff continues to unearth jewels in the face of increasing competition from predatory larger clubs who have begun to realise that producing young players can pay spectacular dividends.

In the past six seasons alone, Crewe have found and sold such talented players as Rob Jones, Danny Murphy, Dele Adebola, Rob Savage, Neil Lennon, Craig Hignett and Wayne Collins. Together they have generated more than £7 million in transfer fees. "We are a small club at a high level, and we have to find players to survive," Gradi said.

"We spend perhaps £200,000 a year on our youth structure and, for a club of our size, that is an awful lot of money. It is the structure that needs to be put into place. A club like ours needs to see results for the investment and that means players coming right through into the first team and beyond."

Crewe estimate that they need to sell one player for a substantial transfer fee to survive. This year, they have sold Adebola to Birmingham City for £1 million, and can afford an Astroturf training ground from the proceeds.

Gradi concurs. His first team, in the Nationwide League first division and dreaming of the play-offs, is made up of kids from the youth team, young cast-offs from bigger clubs and players signed from non-league football.

Kenny Lunt, a first-team regular at 17, will appear at Peterborough. Seth Johnson, Mark Rivers, Steve Garway, Kevin Street and Gareth Whalley have all progressed from the youth team to the first XI. "In the past we have had some outstanding individuals, and we have the same in this side," Holland said. "But I think the team around them is better, the quality all the way through is higher."

Crewe beat Tottenham Hotspur and have also dispatched Manchester City, Birmingham and Sunderland and if they overcome Peterborough, they will face an FA Carling Premiership club in the semi-finals. An unequal contest, maybe, but then Gradi and his staff have been fighting the odds for years - and winning.

FIFTH ROUND RESULT: Arsenal 1, Leeds United 1. FIXTURES: Today, Peterborough v Crewe (March 18); Everton v Ipswich (March 28); Chelsea v Blackburn.



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FA to look at videos of Cup-tie flare-ups

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

PATRICK VIEIRA, the Arsenal midfielder player, and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink, the Leeds United striker, could face disciplinary action from the Football Association as a result of incidents during the FA Cup quarter-finals at the weekend. The FA is to review video evidence before deciding whether further action is warranted.

Vieira was involved in a fracas at the end of the draw against West Ham United in which he appeared to lash out at John Moncur, the West Ham midfielder player.

"I thought the ref had awarded a free kick when, in fact, he had blown the final whistle," Vieira said. "Moncur then came over and barged into me. I'd been having a row with Lampard throughout the game and, at the end, he punched me."

Hasselbaink missed a penalty for Leeds in the closing stages of the 1-0 defeat by Wolverhampton Wanderers at Elland Road on Saturday. Keith Curle, the Wolves defender, immediately said something to him and Hasselbaink appeared to head-butt Curle.

Vieira is free to play in the replay at Upton Park next Tuesday after originally being told that he would miss the game because of suspension. Paul Durkin, the referee who cautioned Vieira in the FA Carling Premiership match between the sides last week, has since deemed the booking "unjustified", after reviewing it on video.

The FA Cup semi-final between Wolverhampton and Arsenal or West Ham will be played at Villa Park on Sunday, April 5, with the kick-off at noon. The other semi-final, between Coventry City or Sheffield United and Newcastle United will be at Old Trafford (8pm).

Bradford City and Bury have been fined £25,000 each, £20,000 of which is suspended until the end of the 1998-1999 season, as a result of a brawl when the teams met at Valley Parade on December 13.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Table listing football fixtures including National League, Second Division, and Third Division matches.

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SPORT IN BRIEF

Ireland opt for settled approach

RUSSELL KEMPSON: Warren Gatland, the Ireland coach, yesterday named an unchanged team to meet Wales in the Five Nations Championship in Dublin on March 21. He said it was a vote of confidence in the men who lost narrowly to France in Paris on Saturday. Cl Chris Simpson-Daniel, 19, a former England Schools captain, makes his debut at scrum half for Newcastle tonight in their third Dublin Premiership match at home to Sale.

BOWLS: Richard Corrie skipped Willie Galloway, his Edinburgh team-mate, to an 18-17 win over Roy Battersby and David Corkhill, of Ireland, in the semi-finals of the pairs at the British Isles indoor bowls championships in Swansea.

TABLE TENNIS: Lisa Lomas, who won the English national women's singles title for a fourth time on Sunday, announced yesterday that she would retire after the European championships in April and become a member of the England coaching team.

REAL TENNIS: Julian Snow, of Great Britain, trails Robert Fabry, of Australia, 5-3 after the second day of the world championship challenge in Melbourne and must win all four sets to be played tomorrow.

CYCLING: A bout of flu forced Lance Armstrong, of the United States, to withdraw from the Paris-Nice race yesterday. David Ebejerria, of Spain, won the 170.5km second stage.

CRICKET: Sussex have agreed terms with Richard Davis, 31, the left-arm spin bowler, to add strength and experience to their one-day squad.

ROWING: St Edward's, Oxford, retained their Schools Head title in record time yesterday, finishing 12sec ahead of Abingdon.

Advertisement for Citibank featuring the slogan 'Just one reason you're better off with Citibank' and 'Citibank 4.75% gross'. It lists various services like NatWest 2.0% gross and First Direct 0.3% gross, and includes contact information for Citibank.

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CRICKET 46

Tendulkar's century takes India to brink of victory

SPORT

TUESDAY MARCH 10 1998

RACING 47

Loder to train 60 two-year-olds for Godolphin

Northampton soften their stance in rugby union's club versus country dispute

Players handed tour choice

By DAVID HANDS RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE war between the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and England's leading clubs is far from over...

That will leave Clive Woodward, the England coach, a freer hand with which to select for the two remaining Five Nations Championship matches...

However, Woodward may yet find a fly half crisis on his hands. Even though Ian McGeechan, the Northampton director of rugby, has declared that his club will not jeopardise the international prospects of any individual...

Should that be the case, Woodward will have to decide whether pragmatism should take the place of principle. Grayson is fit and playing well, whereas Mike Catt, the Bath fly half, will be unavailable against Scotland after suffering concussion against Bristol on Sunday...

That is an area where specific circumstances warrant special treatment. How-



Woodward, the England coach, was given a welcome boost yesterday in advance of their remaining Five Nations Championship matches

ever, Woodward will have been pleased to hear McGeechan tone down the comments last week of Keith Barwell, the Northampton chairman. Barwell's decision that his players needed rest this summer was backed by the 11 other first division clubs last Friday, but McGeechan, who coached the British Isles in South Africa last summer, suggested that his chairman's desire was to drive home the need for player welfare.

"From what I understand, Clive has accepted that," McGeechan said. "We need to

consider the state of the players' fitness and that is the point Keith wanted to make. But neither he, nor I, nor the Northampton club, would seek to jeopardise our players' prospects of appearing for England. It would be all against ethos at this club. Keith would never put our players at a disadvantage to any other player in the [Allied Dunbar] Premiership. The clubs support a strong England."

Woodward offered a robust defence of his meeting with most of the England senior

squad last Wednesday, after which he was accused of coercion and bullying by the clubs. Woodward admitted that the summer tour schedule, embracing internationals against Australia, New Zealand (twice) and South Africa, was "ridiculous", but it was one that he had inherited and he had no intention of reneging on the commitment.

The RFU has taken steps to limit the 1999 close-season commitments. A similar tour had been planned, four months before the World Cup, but now only one summer

international will be played. "I told the players that already I felt two players would not go on tour this summer, one for personal reasons and the other because he was knackered," Woodward, who asked last October if the tour this summer could be abbreviated, said. "I know who they are and what they want to do."

He hopes to take a party of between 36 and 42 players, many of whom would not be required for the final leg of the tour, in South Africa. Many will play in no more than two

of the four internationals and some may be rested from the remaining Five Nations matches. Woodward said that he had asked Martin Johnson, the Leicester lock, who captained the Lions in South Africa, if he wanted to stand down from the game with Wales last month, but that Johnson declined.

"I can't run the England national team if some third-party decides players are not available," Woodward said. "I have full responsibility for running the team. The club owners can't come back to me and say the rules have been changed. What's going on at the moment is putting a knife to all our dreams, our aspirations, of winning the World Cup."

Guscott takes swipe at elite squad concept

By MARK SOUSTER

JEREMY GUSCOTT, the Bath and England centre, said yesterday that if international players abandoned their clubs and signed contracts pledging their long-term future to the Rugby Football Union (RFU), it would be akin to "turkeys voting for Christmas".

Guscott, who has declared himself available for this summer's tour, does not believe that the stated aim of Fran Cotton, the RFU's management board vice-chairman, to recruit an elite squad to Twickenham, is the correct way forward.

Guscott, 32, said: "The RFU would have the monopoly on players and you only have to think a little down the line as a player. It would be the end of the control that the players have. The players are pretty much free agents; if they tie with the RFU, they won't have that."

At Twickenham yesterday Cotton reiterated that the RFU's policy is to sign 35 players on lucrative four-year contracts but would not elaborate on how this would be financed. He refused to comment on reports that the RFU is seeking to raise £5 million to create a war chest. He also denied that any approach had been made to Lawrence Dallaglio, the England captain, to admit that talks had been held with Gary Connolly, the Wigan and Great Britain rugby league player.

Guscott does not think that players, while still anxious to play for England, would turn their backs on the clubs. He feels that the existing contracts, which have in-built release clauses, are more than adequate. "I would hope that players stay with the clubs and the contracts remain permanent with the clubs. The RFU would like to hold those contracts as they do in South Africa and New Zealand."

"The culture of rugby here is so different and we cannot be compared with those countries. Let them get on and do what they do well and let us try and get on and do what we need to well. If players sign with the RFU, it is like turkeys voting for Christmas."

"Our culture is club rugby. We have tried the regional route but there is no identity. We should always look to improve our club rugby rather than impose divisional rugby."

He does not believe that any player would ever willingly reject the chance of playing for England. "Nor does he think that clubs will force players to stay at home this summer."

Bath meet with their England counterpart today. "We will be allowed to make our own mind up, no arm-twisting. Any club would be mad to deny a player the opportunity to play for his country and go on tour because it only enhances the profile of the club and gets people through the gates. Everybody should



Guscott available to tour

he gives the right to play for their country."

Guscott, who returned to action only in January after injury, added: "I am available to tour. It is only common sense that we can't go back on what we have said. Clive has built a relationship with the players based on honesty. Unless I don't understand the contract, no one can stop me from going on tour. I am free to ignore the club's advice."

"I am still very loyal to the club. They have done a lot for the players, unlike the RFU. Everything the clubs have promised, they have delivered. I can't say the same about the RFU. I am not talking about Clive Woodward because everything he has promised, he has delivered."

Clubs ask president to step in

ENGLAND'S leading clubs are to ask Peter Brook, the president of the Rugby Football Union, to intervene in an attempt to broker a settlement in the increasingly bitter dispute that is scarring the sport (Mark Souster writes). The club versus country controversy is but a symptom, not the cause, of the on-going feud with Twickenham on a range of issues.

Last night Brook said that he would be more than willing to assist. "I'll go any-

where, do anything, and talk to anyone if it helps." The president hoped that dialogue could be established between the warring factions, despite the fact that both sides appear as entrenched as ever.

"We are appealing to Peter Brook to step in," Donald Kerr, the chairman of English Rugby Partnership (ERP), said. At the same time, ERP want Brook to launch an investigation into the way that the union's business is being run. Kerr said yesterday that

policy statements by Cliff Brittle and Fran Cotton, respectively the chairman and vice-chairman of the management board on the future of the game, had not been approved by the board or the council. "They are acting ultra vires," Kerr said. "They do not have the authority to make these statements. The union has been hijacked by Cotton and Brittle and it is the duty of people to stand up to them for the sake of the game."

Cliff Brittle, the RFU management board chairman, also justified his stance against the leading clubs. However, he denied that any thought of expulsion for breach of International Rugby Board regulations had entered his head. "That would be in nobody's interests, the players or the union's," he said. But he left no one in any doubt that he perceives a number of the club owners to be responsible for the breakdown.

Francis approves terms for return

By RICHARD HOBSON

TREVOR FRANCIS returned to St Andrew's yesterday, less than 48 hours after resigning as the Birmingham City manager. He is back on his own terms after a lesson to those in football who would chase a fast buck at any cost.

Francis said that he felt compelled to take a stand over what he saw as the loss of privileges, namely a lounge area usually reserved for players and guests after matches, to corporate clients, who paid £2,000. Abuse, verbal and physical, directed towards his family by some of that party, represented the last straw.

He received "overwhelming" messages of support from players and supporters on Sunday, but only agreed to withdraw his resignation after assurances from David Gold, the chairman, that in future the commercial arm will not impinge on the playing side. He will reassess his position at the end of the season.

Francis said: "Without me, the players do not have any support at all at this club. When their privileges are taken away without consultation they are very angry. I would have been letting them down if I had not done anything. I was prepared to give up my job to support them."

Karren Brady, the managing director, confirmed that Francis had not been consulted over the decision. Francis protested to David Sullivan, the major shareholder, an hour before the game against Queens Park Rangers on Saturday.

"He agreed that for £2,000 it was absolutely the wrong decision," Francis said. "After the game, some people tried to barge into my room and tip over food. They were abusive to my wife and children and some of the players. They insulted my son, then pushed him against a car, nose to nose, and wanted to fight him." Birmingham will ban the offenders for life.



Francis: last straw

FIA rejects protest over McLaren pact

By JOHN GOODBODY

THE world governing body for Formula One has rejected the protest by the organisers of the Australian Grand Prix that the McLaren team had contrived the result of the opening race of the season.

International outrage increased yesterday over the secret agreement between the two McLaren drivers that whoever was leading at the first bend would be allowed to drive unchallenged by his team-mate for first place.

David Coulthard, of Brit-Against the odds 3 History of teamwork ... 50

ain, who was behind Mika Hakkinen at the first bend, pulled over with two laps to go to allow the Finn to pass him and win the race. In Britain, punters, some of whom had placed £1,000 on Coulthard to win, were furious and bombarded bookmakers and the McLaren team with complaints.

Ron Walker, the chairman of the Australian Grand Prix Corporation, faxed a letter of protest to the FIA that said: "We have always maintained that Formula One drivers are in the same category as Olymp-

pic athletes in terms of their outstanding fitness. It's not the right of team owners to decide who is going to win."

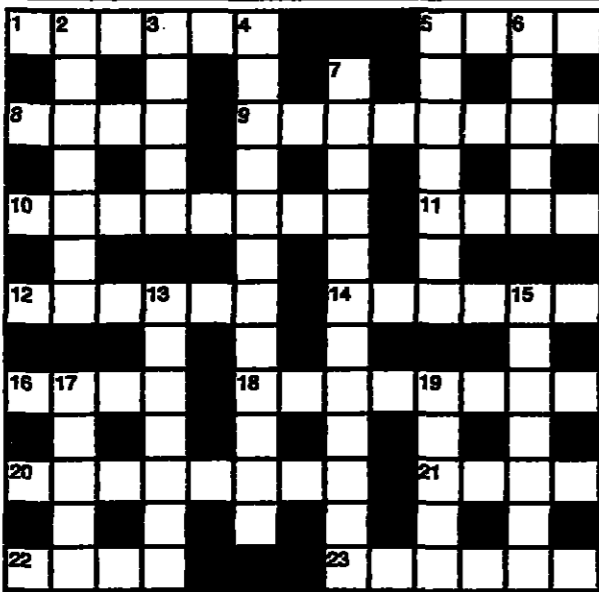
However, a FIA spokesman said: "Team orders specifying the finishing order of drivers within a team have existed in motor sport since the beginning of the century. It would, therefore, not be right to criticise or sanction McLaren-Mercedes for what it did at Sunday's Grand Prix."

He said that the World Motor Council (WMC), which oversees Formula One, would discuss at its meeting on March 18 whether this practice should be allowed to continue.

If it does, Coulthard wants to benefit. He said: "I am expecting to be repaid. I could have won the opening race, but hopefully we will put this to bed after the next race and carry on from there. After two races we should be on an even keel. I am not giving away four points."

Mel Goldberg, one of Britain's leading sports-lawyers, questioned whether McLaren and the drivers involved had "a duty of care to those punters who quite innocently placed money on Coulthard to win", adding that legal action was "possible".

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



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